Fighting Fantazine

THE FIGHTING FANTASY & GAMEBOOK FAN MAGAZINE

MUCKING ABOUT ON TITAN!

THE SECOND PART OF AN INTERVIEW WITH WRITER PAUL MASON

ascent of darkness

A BRAND NEW **BUMPER** FIGHTING FANTASY ADVENTURE!

AZZUR'S SEAT OF POWER!

OUT AND ABOUT IN PORT BLACKSAND

ROGUE TRACER!

THE FACT OF FICTION GOES HUNTING FOR FACTS IN STAR STRIDER

ISSUE 11
April 2013

II ANISEED II

ADVANCED FIGHTING FANTASY

Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone
Advanced Fighting Fantasy
The Roleplaying Game
Out of the Pit
Monsters of Advanced Fighting Fantasy
Titan
The Advanced Fighting Fantasy World
Arion Games
Marc Gascoigne

2011 saw the return of one of the classic British RPG's in Advanced Fighting Fantasy, Out of the Pit and Titan.

The release has proved very popular and this simple but deep game is now firmly back in the modern gamer psyche right across the world.

Crown of Kings
A Campaign for Advanced Fighting Fantasy
Heroes Companion
Blacksand
Beyond the Pit
Arion Games
Andrew Wright

A game this good deserves supplements, and Arion Games is delivering! The Sorcery campaign was released last year and the Heroes Companion has just hit the shops with new magic, mass battles, wilderness adventures and organisation rules.

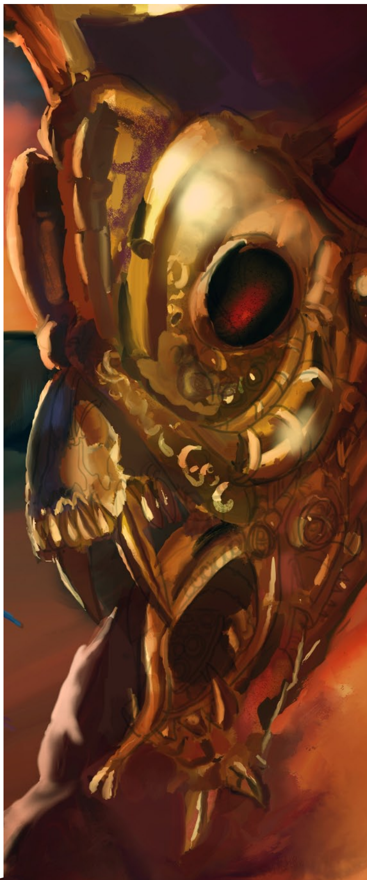
Very soon Blacksand will be back, introducing a new generation to the pit of scum and villainy that is the infamous Port and shortly after that Beyond the Pit is scheduled for release with another huge batch of monsters and creatures.

This year should also see a whole swathe of extra releases, taking your Advanced Fighting Fantasy adventures into whole new regions!

Available from all good games stores or direct from Arion Games:

www.arion-games.com/store.html

ARION GAMES



The nose is a definite improvement.

Yes, the magazine has undergone something of a regeneration. You can take that as either an attempt to keep things interesting, or a sign that the editor was getting a little bored with the previous layout (or even a sign that we’re trying to get the magazine ready to offer print versions in addition to the pdfs)! Part of this regeneration is the fresh lick of paint to the layout of the magazine, but a major part of it is something you will have spotted in the subtitle of the magazine, where it is now “The Fighting Fantasy *& Gamebook* Fan Magazine”.

This doesn’t mean were are taking our eye off of *Fighting Fantasy*, as like many we’re always keenly awaiting news of possible new titles, but it does mean that the magazine is stretching its wings to better include a wider world of gamebooks. As a result of this the reviews section has grown and in future issues I hope we can cover even more gamebook-related material (if you think you can join our team of reviewers then get in touch as there is always more titles than we can review).

Also part of the new tweaks to the magazine is that the URLs that appear in the magazine are now hyperlinked in the pdf format, so clicking on them should take you to the webpage in question. Which seems like the right moment to move onto the rest of the issue. Beyond the beefed up our news and reviews sections, all of your favourite regulars are intact with *Ascent of Darkness*, a mini adventure from new news editor Stuart Lloyd, another instalment of “The Fact of Fiction” looking at *Star Strider*, and the second half of our interview with *Fighting Fantasy* alumni Paul Mason.

So sit back, relax, and enjoy the thrill ride that is issue #11!

Alex

Alexander Ballingall, Editor

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NEXT DEADLINE
June 30th 2013

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Fighting Fantazine – The Fighting Fantasy & Gamebook Magazine Issue 11
II ANISEED II
Published April 2013 by Aniseed.

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ISSN 2324-4062

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by **assorted rogues**

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26 Ascent of Darkness: A **Fighting Fantasy** adventure

by **Stuart Lloyd**

Illustrated by **Michael Wolmarans**

The Caarth horde threatens your home, the shining city of Carsepolis, but you are an unstoppable force who cuts swathes through the legions of darkness. However, news of the death of your father awakens you to a greater, more insidious danger that lurks within the walls of Carsepolis itself. Can you overcome reptillian hordes, mighty warriors and devious magic users to stop the ascent of darkness?

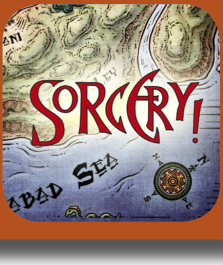
Turn to paragraph 1.

NEWS FROM EVERY CORNER OF TITAN AND BEYOND!

Omens & auguries

AT THE CORE OF THE GAMEBOOK COMMUNITY

> “Managing the inventory in these situations has been a bit of a headache, but we’ve nailed it down really well.”
>
> Neil Rennison, head honcho of Tin Man Games



CAST SOME MAGIC!
More details about the *Fighting Fantasy* title from inkle.
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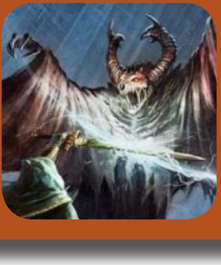


RESURRECTION!
The *Lone Wolf* gamebook series is on the move to new pastures.
Page 11

Défis Fantastiques
LE JEU DE RÔLE

OOH LA LA!
The French get in on the *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* action.
Page 15

Take a wander through **Darkwood Forest!**

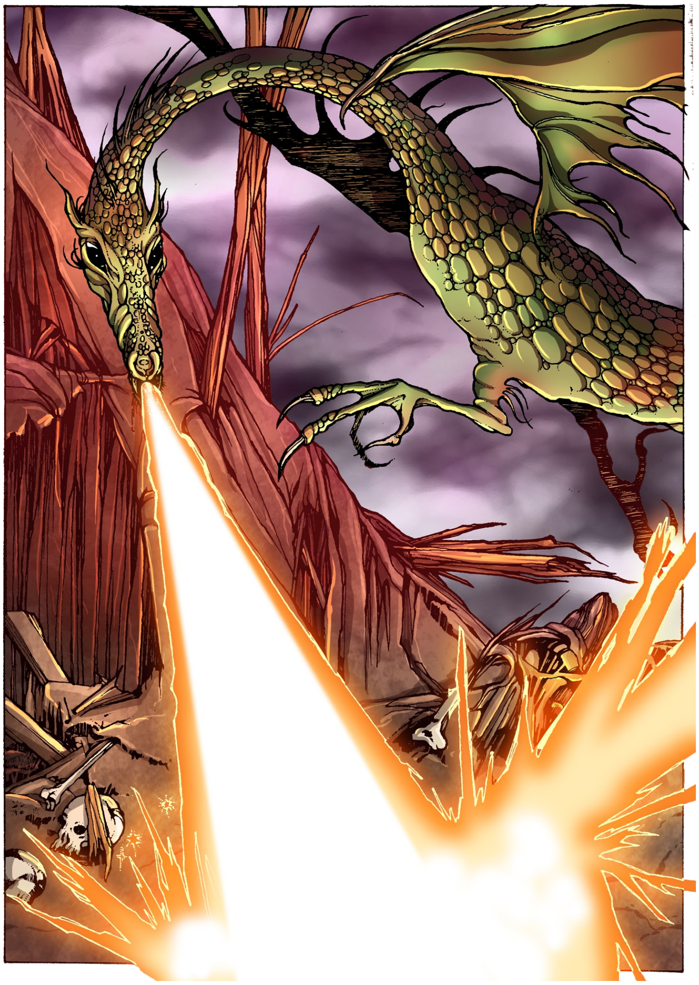
Tin Man Games are back with their third *Fighting Fantasy* adaptation since kicking off last year with *Blood of the Zombies*s, keeping the ball rolling in 2013 with Ian Livingstone's 1983 adventure *Forest of Doom*. As head honcho of the indie game developer, Neil Rennison, explains, "Ian actually suggested it in one of our early meetings. It's one of the classics so we agreed on the spot!"

Livingstone's suggestion however wasn't the only consideration for the team when choosing the next title to adapt. "It has also never been released as an app before, unlike some of the other early titles that were developed by Big Blue Bubble a few years ago," points out Neil.

Tin Man Games are keen to authoratively put their own stamp on the *Fighting Fantasy* app range, especially the fantasy realm. "As the new torch-bearers of Fighting Fantasy apps," starts Neil, "we wanted to give the fans a new title, and especially in the fantasy genre to follow up *Blood of the Zombies* and *House of Hell*."

Ian meanwhile hasn't been distant form the project, personally approving of the new colourised artwork by John-Paul Bove. "But," adds Neil, "as we're keeping the app pretty faithful to the original book, there hasn't been a need to run too much past him."

Having two *Fighting Fantasy* titles out already means that the goals can be slightly different this time around. But



Forest of Doom

APP for iPad, iPhone, iPod Touch, Android Google Play and Amazon Appstore

TIN MAN GAMES

WRITTEN BY Ian Livingstone
ILLUSTRATED BY Malcolm Barter
COVER ART BY Iain McCaig
COLOURING BY John-Paul bove
MUSIC BY Adrian Watkins
CODED BY Ben Britten Smith
EDITED BY Neil Rennison
PRODUCED BY Neil Rennison

RELEASED 7 MAY (Google Play) & MAY 21 (iOS & Amazon)*
PRICE US$5.99*

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?
YOU are on a mission to recover the missing Dwarf warhammer, stolen from the town of Stonebridge.

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- Achievements and gallery to unlock
- Alternate cover to unlock
- 3D physics-based dice
- Automated adventure sheet

For more information, visit tinmangames.com.au

***Release date subject to change and price is RRP**

while it may not be the title that launches the range, Neil does feel that (as mentioned already) it launches the fantasy side of *Fighting Fantasy*. Therefore Neil hopes that *Forest of Doom* will "take the brand one step further and really kick off the fantasy books in style."

He also notes that *Doom* won't have to make this launch on its own, with some heavy-hitting Livingstone firepower to follow quick on its heels. "We're following up this with *Deathtrap Dungeon* in a back-to-back release," enthuses Neil, "so that newcomers to *Fighting Fantasy* can really see what all the fuss was about in the 1980s!"

The bridge between newcomers and established fans can't be better illustrated than with the cover art of the adventure. Neil points out that "We also want a bit of nostalgia overload and have animated Ian McCaig's iconic cover of the shapeshifter." To balance the other side of the equation he reflects that the app will be "also including a brand new piece of artwork from our very own Dan Maxwell that brings that same shapeshifter firmly into 2013."

Naturally making something more than simply scanned pages of the original book is going to involved a great deal of effort and a few challenges. One element that proved a small hill to climb was inventory. As Neil explains, "There are a lot of items in *Forest of Doom* for starters. Lots of magical items that can be bought, found and given up at key points. Managing the inventory in these situations has been a bit of a headache, but we've nailed it down really well."

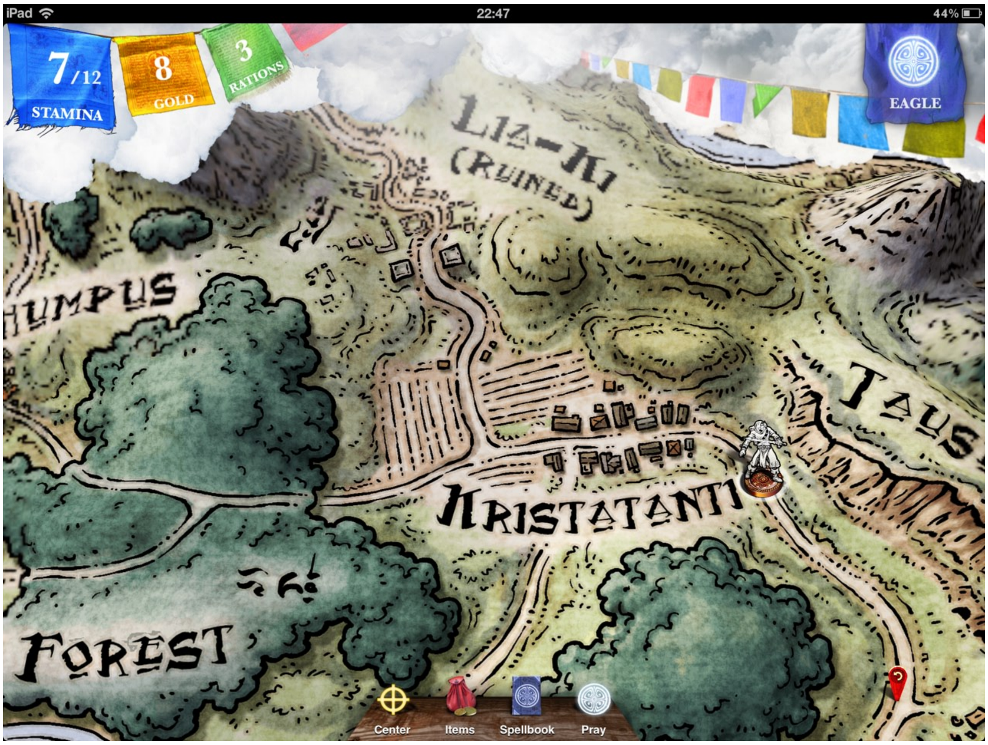
Despite the inventory issue, fans of the two previous adaptations can expect a familiar look and feel to the app. Neil feels that "we've perfected our pipeline now for the next few *Fighting Fantasy* titles, so if you enjoyed the experience in *Blood of the Zombies* and *House of Hell*, then you'll love *Forest of Doom*."

The experience of playing *Forest of Doom* is important to the designers, some of whom, like Neil, count themselves as fans of the *Fighting Fantasy* series. "I think I'm most proud about the fact that we're creating our own *Forest of Doom* experience," states Neil. "It's such an important gamebook for a lot of 30-somethings and out of all the fans out there, we are the ones with the responsibility."

But naturally as a fan there are times when it can seem a little surreal to working on something that you are a fan of, a point which Neil acknowledges. "I do have to pinch myself sometimes."

ALEXANDER BALLINGALL

BUY IT BECAUSE: An old classic gets a loving makeover from the excellent team at Tin Man Games.



The *Fighting Fantasy* app resurgence continues this year with the release of the first of four *Sorcery!* adaptations, all coming from inkle studios.

inkle are a relatively new team on the block, but have already made waves with their impressive, interactive app version of *Frankenstein* as penned by gamebook veteran Dave Morris.

"That got a lot of great reviews," says inkle's creative director Jon Ingold, "and when we met Steve Jackson and showed it to him he was pretty impressed."

The *Sorcery!* series, initially pitched at adults as something separate from *Fighting Fantasy* (despite the same game system), is seen by many as something of a landmark cornerstone of the *Fighting Fantasy* brand.

"I was really keen on *Sorcery!* because I particularly loved the books when I was younger – the spell-casting mechanic was great fun, the books were full of tricks and puzzles, but above all I loved the sense of carrying one character across four linked adventures," Ingold explains as part of the reasoning behind snapping up the licence when the opportunity arose.

Unlike the previous attempt to bring the *Sorcery!* titles to iOS, inkle have opted for a different and more creative approach to the translation from book to app.

"We had pretty ambitious goals when we started off," states Ingold. "Steve wanted to do something 'high tech', and we wanted to build on our work with *Frankenstein*, which was all about making the story-choices more intimate and more detailed."

Frankenstein and *Sorcery!* both make use of the inklewriter engine which remembers every single decision a reader makes, and can alter the story, the choices, and even the text depending on what they've done, where they've been and what kind of character they've chosen to be.

With that as the basic bedrock of the app, Ingold points out that, "we knew from the start we weren't simply 'putting' the original book onto an iPad – we were planning to expand, extend, and go deeper into the material. To give you a sense of that – *The Shamutanti Hills* has ~450 paragraphs: last time we compiled our app it has ~3,200 – though I should say they're all quite a lot shorter!"

Expanding the possibilities of *Sorcery!* wasn't the only place where the inkle team opted to make significant changes, with the two-dice combat system of the *Fighting Fantasy* range giving way to something different.

"We wanted to do something that felt really good on an iPad," enthuses Ingold, "something that wasn't random, and would feel strategic and deep, but still be as simple to use as the original *Fighting Fantasy* system. We looked around for examples in other games and couldn't find any – so we made one from scratch. That was nerve-wracking, until we got the details right!"

All of this is essentially put together by a small team of two people, Ingold and Joseph Humfrey.

Ingold explains the division of labour by pointing out that, "Joe is a superb coder, but also he's great with visual design and interfaces, and that combination means we can do some magical things. For instance, in *Sorcery!* you pick your route across a huge hand-drawn map – but that map is rendered in 3D, with mountains looming up from the paper. It's an awesome effect. Similarly,

Get lost among the Shamutanti Hills!

in the combat system, our gameplay interface is almost like setting up a frame an interactive comic, where you position your character in the scene to choose the attack.

For myself, I'm a game designer but also a writer, and there was a lot of extra work to do in adapting the content and providing all the variations for the different types of character the player can become. Not to mention all the text for the combat sequences, which generate a story description of the fight as you play – and those are unique to each monster, and each location, as well being affected by what spells you've cast."

So while fans who have previously played the adventure in the dead tree format may feel familiar with the story, there have been tweaks everywhere.

"*Sorcery!* has a lot of different elements," Ingold explains, "the art, the map, the combat, the spells and the spellbook, the text, the inventory, the story – and we've managed to bring them together in a way that feels something like a board-game while staying absolutely true to the original books. That was a real challenge, but we think the finished product is pretty unique."

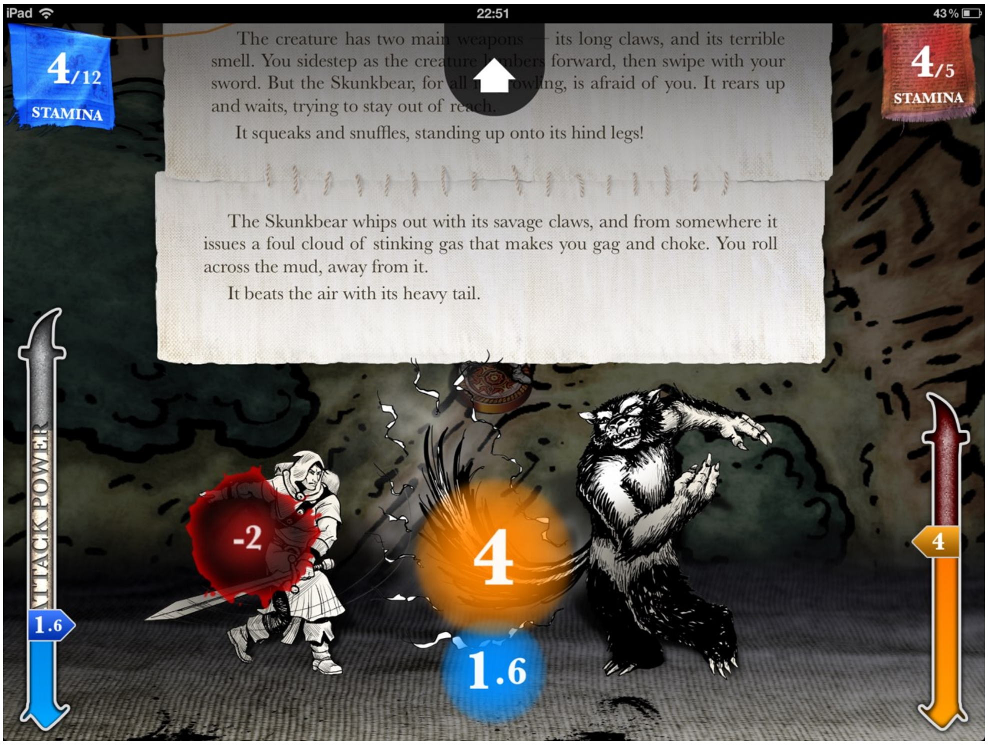
But the app isn't just pitched at long time fans of the *Fighting Fantasy* range as Ingold illustrates, "We think we've made an app that anyone can enjoy. New players should be able to pick up the app and get playing immediately. There are no rules to learn before you start."

Early reaction to demos has been very positive for the app. "We took it to PAX East in March," recalls Ingold, "and showed it to old fans, and people who'd never heard of *Sorcery!*, and people were getting really excited and keen to get stuck in and play the game for themselves. We had a lot of people say they were going to buy an iPad just to play the game!"

Finally, if a celebrity endorsement is needed to sway the punter into purchasing, Ingold happily notes that, "Steve loves it."

ALEXANDER BALLINGALL

BUY IT BECAUSE: With the additional inkle studios polish it feels fresh and new, even for the most jaded of established fans.



The creature has two main weapons — its long claws, and its terrible smell. You sidestep as the creature lumbers forward, then swipe with your sword. But the Skunkbear, for all its howling, is afraid of you. It rears up and waits, trying to stay out of reach.

It squeaks and snuffles, standing up onto its hind legs!

The Skunkbear whips out with its savage claws, and from somewhere it issues a foul cloud of stinking gas that makes you gag and choke. You roll across the mud, away from it.

It beats the air with its heavy tail.

SORCERY!
BAD SEA

Sorcery!

APP for iPad, iPhone and iPod Touch

INKLE STUDIOS

WRITTEN BY Steve Jackson
DESIGNED & DEVELOPED BY inkle
ILLUSTRATED BY John Blanche
CHARACTER ART BY Eddie Sharam
MAP BY Mike Schley
MUSIC BY David Wise

RELEASED 2 MAY*
PRICE US$4.99*

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

Embark on a four-part epic journey across the wilds of Kakhabad, a land of monsters, traps and magic, on a quest to recover the Crown of Kings.

EXTRA FEATURES

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- Your choices rewrite the text of the story itself
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- Each monster has its own fighting style and weaknesses
- Fights are narrated turn-by-turn by our unique text generation system
- 48 magic spells to master, with weird and wonderful effects that change the story
- Carry your character across all four apps

For more information, visit www.inklestudios.com/sorcery

***Release date subject to change and price is RRP**

Windhammer

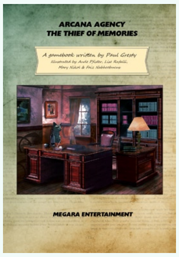
■ Congratulations to the winner of the 2012 Windhammer competition Zachary Carango with his entry, *Final Payment* and to the merit award winners Ashton Saylor with his entry, *Legacy of the Zendari* and to Marty Runyon for his entry *Academy of Magic – The First Term*.

These entries will be published as apps by Tin Man Games. The guidelines for the 2013 competition have been published and can be found at www.arborell.com/windhammer_prize.html.

Way of the Tiger RPG

■ Megara Entertainment has released an open beta version of *The Way of the Tiger RPG* which you can download from www.megara-entertainment.com/WAYTIGERRPGBETA1.3.pdf. Comments are welcome on Megara's message boards. You are still able to pre-order the rulebooks from their website at www.megara-entertainment.com.

Memory thief



■ Megara Entertainment has also released the pdf and hard copies of *Arcana Agency: The Thief of Memories* following a successful Kickstarter campaign. The demo is still available from the website and the full gamebook is available to buy. Place your order, via PayPal, to contact@megara-entertainment.com for US$40 or €30 (shipping included). Review page 100

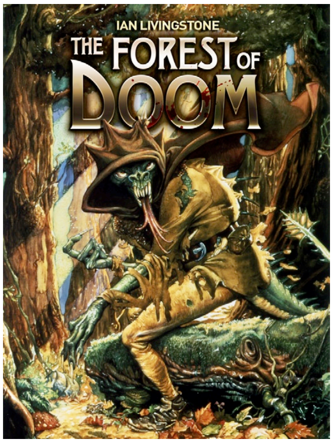
FIGHTING FANTASY

News is scarce on the ground in some arenas for the veteran gamebook range.

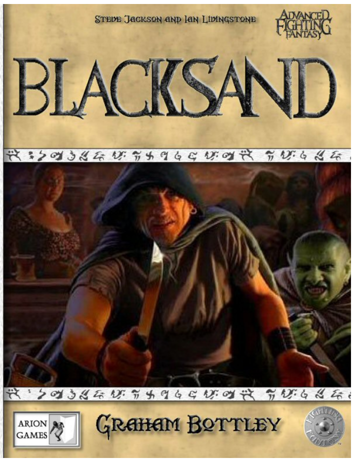
Ross Brierley of Laughing Jackal has confirmed that they currently have no plans for further adaptations for the PS3 beyond the two titles already released, and Henry Lord at Wizard Books sadly related that there is currently nothing in the pipeline with regard to either new titles or reprints.

This leaves the various app adaptations and *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* as the current torch bearers for the range (see page 15 for French developments in the realms of *Fighting Fantasy*, *AFF*, and app adaptations).

TIN MAN GAMES



Tin Man Games has released its second Fighting Fantasy book, *House of Hell* for the iOS (£5.99), Android (£3.99) and Nook (£5.99). It's next *Fighting Fantasy* apps are *Forest of Doom* (see page 6) and *Deathtrap Dungeon*. An adaptation of *Appointment with F.E.A.R.* is currently expected to arrive in August.



INKLE STUDIOS

The company that bought us *Frankenstein* by Dave Morris are set to release the first *Sorcery!* gamebook in May (see page 8) with an adaptation of *Kharé: Cityport of Traps* to be released in the northern summer.

ADVANCED FIGHTING FANTASY

Arion Games continues with its releases of *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* material. In February (with advance copies out in December last year), it released the *Heroes' Companion* which provides new skills, talents, spells and magical styles. It also contains rules for wilderness creation, mass battles and domain management (see review on page 101). Future releases include *Beyond the Pit* by Andrew Wright and an expanded *Blacksand* which are to be available in June and May respectively. At least another two titles are in the very early stages of preparation beyond this, one purported to be a Salamonis sourcebook.

A sci-fi version of *Advanced Fighting* fantasy is currently being developed by Jon Mark Hicks. You can read all about the development at his blog farsightblogger.blogspot.co.uk/.

YOU ARE THE HERO

Jonathan Green's history of the *Fighting Fantasy*, entitled *You are the Hero* was successfully funded on Kickstarter with an impressive £21,421 (142% of the target) which means than Jonathan Green is currently working on this book too. A currently projected release date is sometime in December.

TIN MAN GAMES

***Trial of the Clone* by Zach Weiner is now available on iOS and Android (US$3.99), with plans afoot for more releases as the year goes on.**

Strange Loves 2: Hex Boyfriends by Lacy Wilson is on the blocks for a June release, with the next *Gamebook Adventures* release (#9) finally getting a title. Now called *An Assassin in a Black Helm*, S.P. Osborne's sequel to the first *Gamebook Adventures* title is currently expected in July alongside another adventure.

The second release is part of another new range titled *Gamebook Adventures Masters*, which kicks off with Jamie Wallis & Gary Chalk's *Gary Chalk's Gun Dogs*.

Beyond this, another *Gamebook Adventures* title (#10) is pencilled in for release in September: *Sultans of Rema* by Gaetano Abbondanza.

ALL RELEASE DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE, AND ALL PRICES ARE RRP.

THE ORACLE OF THE STARSTONE CAVES

Your handy guide to the gamebook-related apps, books, magazines, and RPGs available soon...

MAY

THURSDAY 2

APP – iOS

■ **Fighting Fantasy – Sorcery!** by Steve Jackson INKLE STUDIOS US$4.99 See page 8

TUESDAY 7

APP – iOS, Android

■ **Fighting Fantasy – Forest of Doom** by Ian Livingstone TIN MAN GAMES US$5.99 See page 6

SATURDAY 29

BOOK – Innerstar University

■ **Project Friendship** by Laurie Calkhoven AMERICAN GIRL PUBLISHING INC US$8.95

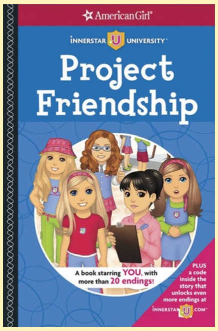
BOOK – Innerstar University

■ **Second Chances** by Erin Falligant AMERICAN GIRL PUBLISHING INC US$8.95

date TBA

APP – iOS, Android

■ **Fighting Fantasy – Le Manoir de l'Enfer*** by Steve Jackson TIN MAN GAMES US$5.99


American Girl
INNERSTAR UNIVERSITY
Project Friendship
A book starring YOU, with more than 20 endings!
PLUS a code inside the story that unlocks even more endings at INNERSTAR U .COM

APP – iOS, Android

■ **Gamebook Adventures Choices 1: Les Fils d'Uruzimé** by TBA TIN MAN GAMES US$2.99

MAGAZINE – pdf

■ **Draco Venturus 3** SCRIPTARIUM Free

RPG – Advanced Fighting Fantasy

■ **Blacksand** by Graham Bottley ARION GAMES US$24.99

RPG – Advanced Fighting Fantasy

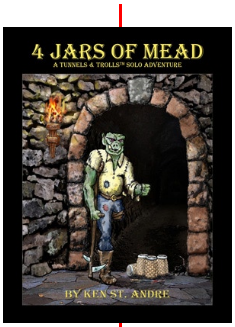
TUNNELS & TROLLS

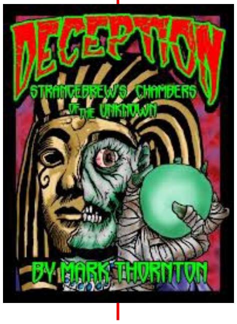
A new edition of *Tunnels & Trolls* is planned for release of summer 2013 after a hugely successful Kickstarter which raised US$125,000.

The new edition will contain new character creation and character development rules and many more details of Trollworld as played by the original players of the game. The deluxe version will still retain the simplicity of the current *Tunnels & Trolls* system and be backwards compatible with older editions of *Tunnels & Trolls*.

TROLLSZINE!

TrollsZine! #7 (review on page 101) came out in March and according to its editor, Dan Hembree, *TrollsZine!* #8 is currently scheduled for release in the northern winter, most likely either November or December.





SOLOS

A solo entitled *Deception: Strangebrew's Chambers of the Unknown* by Mark Thornton and another solo called *4 Jars of Mead* by Ken St. Andre were recently published.

Other solos released include *Soul Survivor* by Sid Orpin and *Rescue Mission* by Ken St. Andre. You can keep track of the latest solo releases at www.tunnelsandtrolls.com/soloadventures.shtml.

There have also been many solos released by independent authors which are available from RPGNow. These include *Off Piste!*, a 350 paragraph solo by Alligator Publishing (£7.21), *Half Sized Adventures*, a collection of short solos from the Hobb Sized Adventures blog (hobbsized.wordpress.com) for £1.97, and *Khagbboommm*, a collection of 5 solos and 1 GM adventure for £1.97.

LONE WOLF

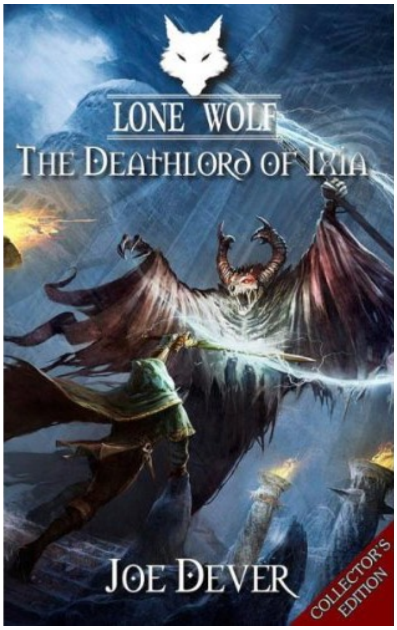
There have been some recent developments with respect to the other major gamebook range of the 1980s – *Lone Wolf* by Joe Dever.

In the first instance, in February Mongoose Publishing announced that they had lost the licence to republish the *Lone Wolf* series of gamebooks, the company stating that the end was "actioned by mutual consent of the author and the publisher". The rights to publish the English-language version of the series were subsequently snapped up by publisher Mantikore-Verlag.

The new publisher intends to carry on with the series where Mongoose have left off, books will be hardcover editions and produced in the same format as the Mongoose 'Collector Editions' in order to maintain a uniformity to the series. Mantikore-Verlag hope to be able to publish book #18, *Dawn of the Dragons*, soon, with an estimated publication date of June this year.

Following that, Mantikore-Verlag plan to publish the other titles in the series from #19 through to #28.

In other news, late April saw the announcement that Cubicle 7 have signed to develop a *Lone Wolf* role-playing game and detailed colour maps of Magnamund.



What time is it?

■ New gamebook series *Which Way, Dude?* is set in the land of Ooo from the television cartoon series *Adventure Time* and the first title, *BMO's Day Out* by Max Brallier, is set to be released in June. It is aimed at readers from age 8 up and is illustrated by Stephen Reed, who has illustrated the collection of *Adventure Time* short stories, *Tales from the Land of Ooo*. The book can be pre-ordered from Amazon.com for US$4.99. A second title, *Jake Goes Bananas* is scheduled for September.

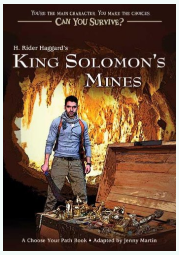
WHICH WAY, DUDE?
ADVENTURE TIME
BMO's Day Out

Where's Perry?

■ A new addition to the Disney gamebook series *It's Your Call* is planned for October. *Secret Agent Showdown* by Carla Jablonski is based on the cartoon television series *Phineas and Ferb*. It can be pre-ordered from Amazon.com for US$4.99.

Down the mine

■ The classic tale *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), by Sir H. Rider Haggard, is being released as a *Choose Your Path* book by Jenny Martin. It is available by pre-order from Amazon.com for US$8.95.



■ **Pirates à la Dérive** by Olivier Monseur SCRIPTARIUM €20

JUNE

FRIDAY 21

BOOK – Destiny Quest

■ **La Légion des Ténèbres** by Michael J. Ward BRAGELONNE €25

THURSDAY 27

BOOK – Which Way, Dude?

■ **BMO's Day Out** by Max Brallier PRICE STERN SLOAN US$4.99

date TBA

APP – iOS, Android

■ **Strange Loves 2: Hex Boyfriends** by Lacy Wilson TIN MAN GAMES US$2.99

APP – iOS, Android

■ **Fighitng Fantasy – Deathtrap Dungeon** by Ian Livingstone TIN MAN GAMES US$5.99

BOOK – Lone Wolf

■ **Dawn of the Dragons** by Joe Dever MANTIKORE-VERLAG price TBA

RPG – Advanced Fighting Fantasy

■ **Beyond the Pit** by Andrew Wright ARION GAMES US$24.99

JULY

THURSDAY 4

BOOK – Moshi Monsters Pick Your Path

■ **title TBA** LADYBIRD BOOKS £4.99

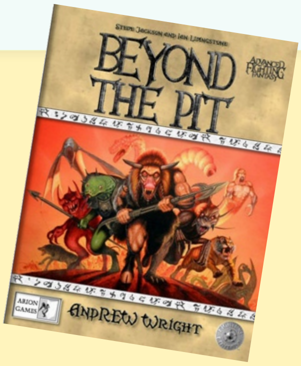
THURSDAY 11

BOOK – I, Hero

■ **Blood Crown Quest 3: Demon Sea** by Steve Barlow & Steve Skidmore FRANKLIN WATTS LTD price TBA

BOOK – I, Hero

■ **Blood Crown Quest 4: City of the Dead** by Steve Barlow & Steve Skidmore FRANKLIN WATTS LTD price TBA



Kickstarter survivor

■ *Survivor – An Elite: Dangerous Gamebook* by Nathaniel Page is scheduled to be released in March 2014 after a successful Kickstarter campaign. It is based on the space game *Elite* which was first released in 1984. The blurb reads as follows:

> *As you begin this task of rebuilding your life, you discover that the recent events are all interconnected. If you wish to restore your name, you will need to expose yourself to an enemy who has destroyed your ship and killed your crew, and who now threatens all of mankind's inhabited systems. Perhaps it would be safer to avoid this enemy entirely? Fight. Or Flight.*

Hunt for the red ruby

■ *Sands of Blood* and *Dragon Mountain* are the first two titles in the *Blood Crown Quest* series (a part of the *I, Hero* range) and from Steve Barlow and Steve Skidmore, who have produced a large number of gamebooks in the *I, Hero* series. The *Blood Crown Quest* series pits you against the Red Queen in a race to find three magical rubies before she can and then use them to cast a permanent shadow over the world. Both are available from Amazon as a paperback for £5.39 or on Kindle for £4.99. Volumes 3 (*Demon Sea*) and 4 (*City of the Dead*) will be released in July.

DECIDE YOUR OWN DESTINY
I HERO
BLOOD CROWN QUEST
DEMON SEA
Steve Barlow ~ Steve Skidmore

OTHER GAMEBOOK DEVELOPMENTS

Also on the slate for release sometime in the near-ish future are the following projects.

■ Gamebooks.js is a new development from Christian Jauvin who is seeking to blend gamebooks with interactive fiction games. As his blog explains:

> *gamebook.js is an experimental crossbreed between two classic genres: interactive fiction (IF) and gamebooks. Instead of navigating an explicit menu of choices (as with a classical gamebook), those are rather willfully concealed after each section, and your job is to "reveal" them by typing any command you want (using clues from the text) which the parser then tries to match. The idea is to expand, as much as possible, the feeling of "freedom" while exploring the gamebook world, as well as offering a novel (and hopefully fun) way to interact with it.*

You are now able to play a 53 paragraph prototype of *Fire on the Water* using gamebooks.js at projectaon.org/staff/christian/gamebook.js/.

■ Calico Chapter Books have a selection of gamebooks due out in August. Under the brand title *Up2u Adventures*, the planned titles are: *Beyond the Grave* and *Clawed!*, both by Dotti Enderle, *Double-Crossed at Castus Flats* by Rich Wallace, *Jonestown Flood* by Lisa & John Mullarkey, *New Girl* by Anastasia Suen, and *Really New School* by Jan Fields.

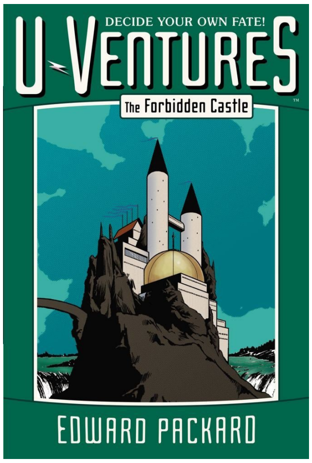
■ Plans progress for Dave Morris' *Virtual Reality* gamebook titles, which are apparently going with the new series title of *Infinite IF*.

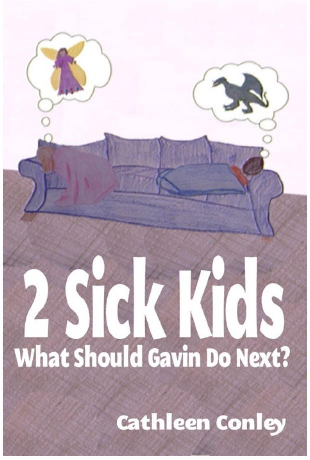
The four books, *Heart of Ice*, *Down Among the Dead Men*, *Necklace of Skulls*, and *Once Upon a Time in Arabia* (formerly titled *Twist of Fate*) are all planned to be out as ePub books early this year. The books all feature new cover art by Jon Hodgson with new material in each book.

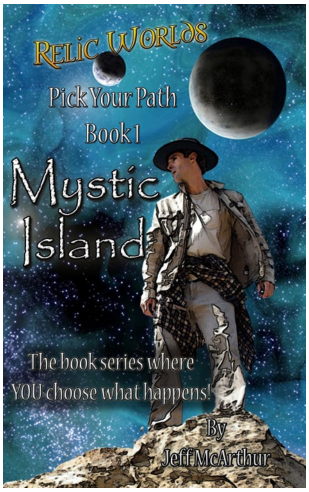
Meanwhile *Frankenstein* (which was published last year on iOS) is set for release on the Kindle and the ePub format. If it fails to surface soon from Profile Books, then the rights revert to Fabled Lands LLC who would publish it in the northern summer. Also lined up for the summer are the first two *Way of the Tiger* titles which are nearly ready for publication.

■ Publishers Random House have an experiment in "free to play online narrative game", which perhaps might be stretching the definition of gamebook for inclusion here. At the time of writing the publishers are keeping much under wraps, including the name of the author, although we do know they are not an established name.

Titled *Black Crown*, people can sign up to play at www.blackcrownproject.com/s in anticipation of the launch sometime in May, or buy a copy of the teaser document *Lincoln's Bedsheet* for the Kindle at Amazon.com It runs on a customised version of Failbetter Games' StoryNexus platform with extra features provided by Popleaf and will utilise a micropayment system which allows readers/players to unlock parts of the story, acquire items, or other such activities.







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APP – iOS, Android
■ **Gamebook Adventures 9 – An Assassin in a Black Helm** by S.P. Osborne TIN MAN GAMES US$5.99
APP – iOS, Android
■ **Gamebook Adventures Masters – Gary Chalk's Gun Dogs** by Jamie Wallis & Gary Chalk TIN MAN GAMES US$5.99
APP – iOS, Android
■ **Fighting Fantasy – La Forêt de la Malédiction*** by Steve Jackson TIN MAN GAMES US$5.99
BOOK – An Interactive History Adventure
■ **The Child Labor Reform Movement** by Steven Otfinoski CHOOSE BOOKS US$6.95
BOOK – An Interactive History Adventure
■ **Ellis Island** by Michael Burgan CHOOSE BOOKS US$6.95
BOOK – An Interactive History Adventure
■ **The Harlem Renaissance** by Allison Lassieur CHOOSE BOOKS US$6.95
BOOK – An Interactive History Adventure
■ **The Oregon Trail** by Matt Doeden YOU CHOOSE BOOKS US$6.95

AUGUST

MONDAY 12
BOOK (Kindle) – Long Shots
■ **Choose Your Shot: An Interactive Erotic Adventure** by Christine d'Abo CARINA PRESS price TBA

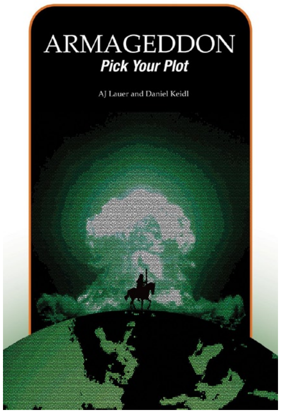
SATURDAY 31
MAGAZINE – pdf
■ **Fighting Fantazine 12** ANISEED Free

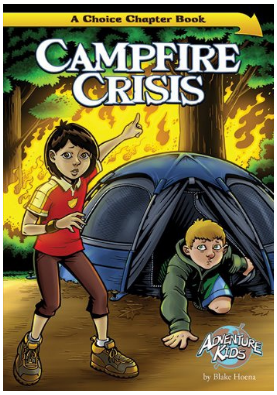
date TBA
APP – iOS, Android
■ **Fighitng Fantasy – Appointment with F.E.A.R.** by Steve Jackson TIN MAN GAMES US$5.99
BOOK – A Choice Chapter Book
■ **Kruse Jasper and the Legend of the Dreamcatcher** by Ryan Jacobson LAKE 7 CREATIVE £4.63

* The French versions of the *Fighting Fantasy* books will be selectable as part of the English app as an update.

RECENT GAMEBOOK ROUNDUP

RED DOG
A COMPLETE ROLE-PLAYING GAME
CHRIS YOUNG





CHOOSE YOUR OWN DEATH
YOU'RE STAR WENCH.
CHOOSE FROM 100 POSSIBLE DEATHS!
STAR WENCH

Other gamebook titles published in the last few months (and managed to avoid our detection) include:

APRIL

■ Edward Packard, a veteran of the *Choose Your Own Adventure* series has been republishing some of his titles under the new series name *U-Ventures*. *Through the Black Hole* (originally *CYOA* #97) was published last year and was joined by *Return to the Cave of Time* (*CYOA* #50) in March this year and now *The Forbidden Castle* (*CYOA* #14) in April.

■ A large 530 reference adventure, *Red Dog Volume 1* by Chris Young (US$13.50):

> *This is not the Earth you remember. Dragged from the present and into this dark and dangerous future, you have total freedom to uncover the hidden secrets of Earth, space station 'Eden' and the mysterious Blackbird Facility. Uncover a determined threat to the freedom of mankind and take your part in the revolution. The future is in your hands.*

■ *2 Sick Kids* by Cathleen Conley, a new title in the *What Should Gavin Do?* series published for the Kindle (US$2.99):

> *Gavin isn't feeling as interactive as usual because he has the flu. He's telling a story rather than living one. You get to make choices for him and his story changes based on your choices. Can you keep a story going long enough for him to feel better or will someone end up feeling too sick to continue?*

■ Books 1~3 of the *Relic Worlds* series by Jeff McArthur were all published for the Kindle under the titles *Mystic Island*, *The Lost City*, and *The Cosmic Orb* (US$2.99 each). At least two further titles are planned and readers who beat all five books can head to the publisher website to claim a prize. According to the blurb for *Mystic Island*:

> *Join Lancaster James on his exciting adventures to explore ancient ruins on distant planets in search of powerful relics that could unlock the greatest mysteries of the universe. Only this time, YOU call the shots. Will Lancaster discover the lost secrets of this ancient civilization? Will he return empty handed? Or will he be killed by fierce creatures, severe environments, or some other horrific danger? Your choices will determine his fate, and perhaps all life in the galaxy. In Mystic Island, Lancaster goes to a planet in the Polaris system where he learns about the mystery of the zebornos, an alien race which populated the system millions of years ago.*

■ Also published is a *Pick Your Plot* adventure titled *Armageddon* by A.J. Lauer & Daniel Keidl (US$8.00):

> *Humans are a lonely, weak species on a giant rock floating in space... Every culture and era interprets this frailty through its myths about the end of times. Truly, these disasters could strike at any moment! You are Elisabeth - a remarkable woman, destined to find herself in Death's way. Can you help Elisabeth survive the disasters awaiting her every turn?*

■ A new *Choice Chapter Book* was published by Lake 7 Creative, *Campfire Crisis* by Blake Hoena:

> *You're camping with your parents and two best friends. Pick your supplies, pack your bags, and have fun. But your outing turns dangerous when you're caught in the middle of a forest fire!*

MARCH

■ A *Choose Your Own Adventure* parody was published as *Star Wench* by Anna Anthropy (US$11.99):

> *You're Star Wench, interstellar adventurer! With your pilot*

A new branch to gamebook history?

■ A possible, previously unheard of, 1940s example of a *Choose Your Own Adventure*-style gamebook has surfaced. Titled *Treasure Hunt - A Fascinating Novelty: A Maze in Novel Form* and by Alan George, the book is described as being primarily a maze with text on one page and art on the opposite. Demian Katz of Gamebooks.org hopes to have access to a copy soon.

Adventurer

■ The core rulebook for *Adventurer* is being prepared for general releaseand the *Adventurer* gamebook *Fire Across the Plains* has been submitted and the Adventure Games Guild will be on the lookout for playtesters. There is also some *Adventurer* material on the Lloyd of Gamebooks blog including character sheets, a mini adventure and a solo dungeon generator.

Green gamebooks

WARHAMMER
Shadows
OVER SYLVANIA
JONATHAN GREEN

■ Jonathan Green has several gamebook projects at the moment. He has just released his second *Path to Victory* book, *Shadows Over Sylvania*. This is based in the *Warhammer Fantasy* setting and is available from Black Library for £13.

Green is also writing a gamebook based on the legend of Beowulf. The project currently has its own blog which can be found at beowulfbeastslayer.blogspot.co.uk.

Maelorum

■ *Maelorum: Volume 1* has been released. You can buy it for US$9.99 (eBook), US$24.99 (softcover), or US$39.99 (harback) from www.maelorum.com. Review page 99

Draco Venturus
Interview exclusive Gary Chalk

Draco Venturus

■ The third issue of *Draco Venturus*, the French fan magazine for gamebook fans, is scheduled for release soon. Featuring an interview with Gary Chalk, it also contains a translation of Stuart Lloyd's *The Curse of the Meraki*, which was the winning entry in 2011 *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* mini-scenario competition and published in issue 7 of *Fighting Fantazine*. Download for free from www.draco-venturus.fr when it becomes available.

Attack of the princess!

■ There is a French gamebook entitled *La princesse attaque!: Un livre dont tu es le héros ou l'héroïne* (Princess attack! A book in which you are the hero or heroine). Written by Delphine Chedru, this is a subversion of the classic fairytale where the princess must rescue the knight. The book is available from Amazon.co.fr for €14.44.

Delphine Chedru
La princesse attaque!

Call of the Cthulu

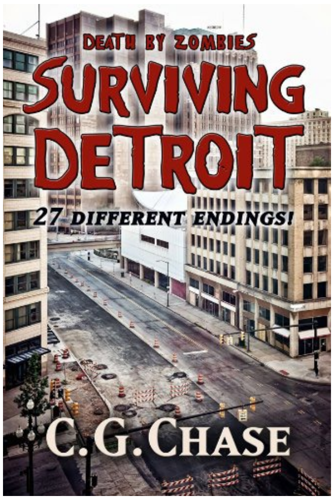
■ Loic Richard has written a French-language Lovecraft inspired gamebook entitled *Plongée sur R'Lyeh* (Diving R'Lyeh) where you are a lieutenant in the German Navy whose task is to stop Hitler from releasing Cthulu and causing an apocalypse. The book is available from www.librairie.immateriel.fr for €3.99 in ePub format.

Loic Richard
Plongée sur R'Lyeh

Suzie Starbright, you cruise the galaxy with only one goal in mind: the powerful and treacherous Queen of Space! With her mind-control raygun eye and her boundless space empire, she is literally unbeatable. Your quest is doomed to failure, but what kind of failure? How does the story end? Only YOU can find out! Your one choice: which page to open up to. Keep reading until you've suffered not one but MANY terrible fates!

■ *Death by Zombies: Surviving Detroit* by C.G. Chase was published for the Kindle (US$2.99):

> *Your goal is simple: Survive. The Zombie Apocalypse has come and gone and now you are etching out a living in the ruins of Detroit. Fast moving, vicious zombies prowl the streets, and you're not even sure if you can trust the living.*

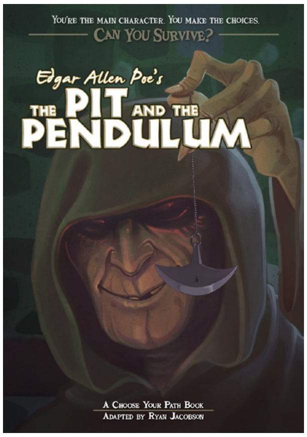

Death by Zombies
Surviving Detroit
27 different endings!
C.G. Chase

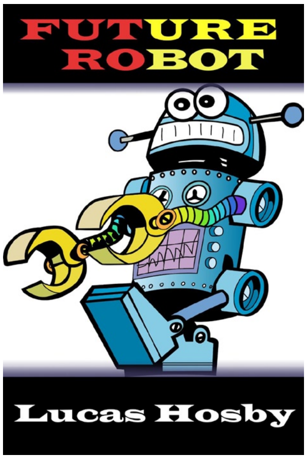
FEBRUARY

■ *The Doll (A Phrenic Story)* by Mike Vogel was published for the Kindle (US$0.99). It is a sci-fi thriller of a tale about clones and creepy talking dolls.

■ A new *Choose Your Path* title, *Edgar Allan Poe's The Pit and the Pendulum* by Ryan Jacobson was published for the Kindle (US$0.99) and as the title suggests is an adaptation of the classic Poe story.

The Doll
A Phrenic Story
Mike Vogel


You're the main character. You make the choices.
Can You Survive?
Edgar Allen Poe's
The Pit and the Pendulum
A Choose Your Path Book
Adapted by Ryan Jacobson


Future Robot
Lucas Hosby

■ *Future Robot* by Lucas Hosby was published for the Kindle (US$2.99):

> *The parents are out of town and a surprise visitor arrives who needs your help. Just how much trouble can you get into in one weekend, exactly?*

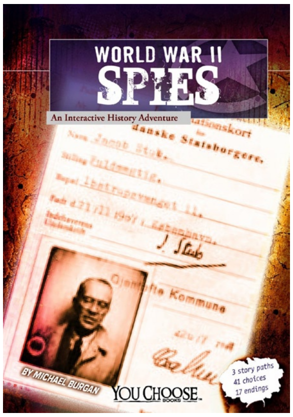
■ A series of titles for the *An Interactive History Adventure* range by You Choose Books were published (US$6.95 each): *Can You Survive an Earthquake?* by Rachael Hanel, *Can You Survive Being Lost at Sea?* by Allison Lassieur, *World War II Infantrymen* by Steven Otfinoski, *World War II Naval Forces* by Elizabeth Raum, and *World War II Pilots* and *World War II Spies*, both by Michael Burgan.

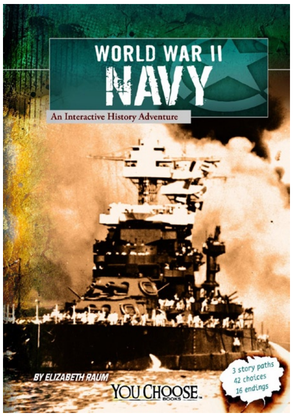
■ Cactus Games brings us a whimsical golf-based gamebook, *The Game of Games*, where you must win the match in order to succeed, but in order to do that you must contend with buffalo, elephants and other strange goings on. The gamebook is available as a pdf from RPGNow.com for £1.32.

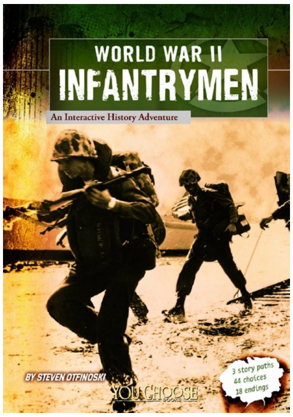
JANUARY

■ The Kickstarter supported app adaptation of Edward Packard's *Underground Kingdom* (*CYOA* #18) was released on iOS for US$2.99.

■ The first *Adventure Begins Here* title was published, *The Renegade Wizard* by A.P. Martin. Price is US$12.99 from Amazon.com for the print version (US$2.99 for the Kindle version).


World War II
Spies
An Interactive History Adventure
By Michael Burgan
You Choose
3 story paths
41 choices
17 endings


World War II
Navy
An Interactive History Adventure
By Elizabeth Raum
You Choose
3 story paths
42 choices
16 endings


World War II
Infantrymen
An Interactive History Adventure
By Steven Otfinoski
You Choose
3 story paths
44 choices
18 endings

FRENCH FIGHTING FANTASY DEVELOPMENTS

The French have been very busy recently with the *Fighting Fantasy* range, seeing in several developments.

To begin with, the translation of Jonathan Green's title *Howl of the Werewolf* (2007) was published in March as *La Nuit du Loup-Garou* (The Night of the Werewolf) by Gallimard.

Fighting Fantasy alumni were on hand at two different events, with Steve Jackson a guest of Gallimard for a special meeting with fans on the 22nd of March and for the le Salon du Livre event in Paris on the 23rd. Elsewhere Russ Nicholson was a guest of le Grimoire (publisher of the French *Lone Wolf* role-playing game) and Scriptarium for Trolls et Légendes, a fantasy convention in Mons, Belgium) on the 30th and 31st of March.

But it is in the realm of *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* that the most movement can be seen. The French translation of the core rule book by Graham Bottley (the English-language version, *Advanced Fighting Fantasy*, was published in 2011), *Défis Fantastiques, le Jeu de Rôle*, was published late March by Scriptarium.

Steve Jackson et Ian Livingstone
UN LIVRE DONT VOUS ÊTES LE HÉROS
La Nuit du Loup-Garou
DÉFIS FANTASTIQUES

This includes new original art by Russ Nicholson and various French artists, as well as a new campaign composed of three adventures, set in the Black Tower, Salamonis, the Windward Plain, Calice, Stonebridge and Darkwood Forest. The name of the campaign is *le Tambour de Gondrim* (Gondrim's Drum). A colour map of Allansia was published separately at the beginning of April.

Plans are already in motion for further additions to the role-playing game with the publication in late April of cardboard tiles and figures for *The Well* and *Agbar's Retreat*, the two original scenarios presented in Bottley's *Advanced Fighting Fantasy*.

Late May will see the publication of a gamemaster screen, including an original adventure, *Pirates à la Dérive* (Drifting Pirates), set in the Ocean of Serpents.

In addition, May will see the release of a French version of Tin Man Games app adaptation of *House of Hell* (as *Le Manoir de l'Enfer*), followed by *Forest of Doom* (*La Forêt de la Malédiction*) in July. Tin Man Games will also be releasing the French-language only adventure *Les Fils d'Uruzimé* in May, the first title in the new *Gamebook Adventures Choices* series.

STEVE JACKSON & IAN LIVINGSTONE
Défis Fantastiques
LE JEU DE RÔLE
GRAHAM BOTTLEY

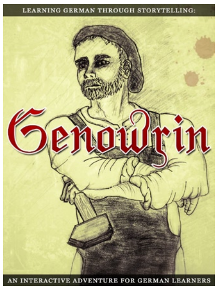
Other non-English language gamebook titles published recently or planned for release include:

- *Les Héros du Magnamund* is to be published soon by Le Grimoire. This is the translation of *Heroes of Magnamund* and includes the translation of the 3 mini-adventures published with the re-releases of the *Lone Wolf* gamebooks by Mongoose.

- A new "game-comicbook" in the series *BD dont vous êtes le héros* is planned (the first two first books of this series, *Chevaliers* and *Pirates*, were published in 2012 by Makaka.

  The new title will be called *Pour Lili* with MC as drawer and Manuro as writer. The latter is well know in French-speaking gamebook fandom as an author of prized gamebooks (the series *Gloire Posthume*, and the stand-alone lovecraftian gamebook *Transomnie*) . No release date announced for now.

- *Genowrin* (US$4.29) is the first title in a trilogy by Andre Klein and is designed as a tool for helping non-German readers improve their German-language skills. The book website states that it is "aimed at intermediate and advanced German learners who already have some basic knowledge but it can also be an exciting way for beginners to get a feeling for the language without being too overwhelming."


LEARNING GERMAN THROUGH STORYTELLING:
Genowrin
AN INTERACTIVE ADVENTURE FOR GERMAN LEARNERS

- A translation of the first *Destiny Quest* title *Legions of Shadows* is to be published, as *La Légion des Ténèbres*, by Bragelonne in June.

- The Spanish gamebook mentioned last issue, *En la Feria Tenebrosa* (At the Dark Show), is now available. This is a horror gamebook set in a fair. It is available from publisher www.sacodehuesos.com for €15.

At the gates of Doregal

- There is a German gamebook out entitled *Verrat in Doregal – Spielbuch* (Betrayal in Doregal – Gamebook). It is a modern fantasy gamebook with a bit of humour where you play a corporal whose unit at the gate of Doregal has been betrayed and you have to rescue your friends, punish the traitor and get Doregal an alliance with your home. The book is written by Damian Murcielago and is available from Amazon.co.uk on the Kindle for £3.45.

Prizes

- An open competition for short interactive stories (up to 40 paragraphs) is to be run by the main Italian site for gamebook fans (www.librogame.net). This is the fifth year they have this competition and a selection of the best interactive stories is published, both online (on the site) and in (limited edition) hard copy. This year theme is the world of Magnamund, with extra rules to be found in the forum on the same site. The competition is open until mid-May, with an open vote on the forum plus selected jury input. Prizes will be handed over to the winner at Lucca Comics 2013, one of the most popular games conventions in Italy.

More prizes

- The 9th edition of Yaztromo prize was announced in March with the winners being *Quand souffle la Tempête*, a 'huis-clos' (a story set in a closed place with limited number of character) set in an isolated inn where you have to investigate the other inhabitants of the inn to survive; *Les noyés*, where you take the responsibility for the lives of 100 civilians and 20 soldiers on an oil platform; and *Chrysalide*, where in a near cyberpunk-future you play two cooperative characters (a private agent and a prostitute, who are both biologically modified "shapechangers") who want to steal the secrets of one of the biggest corporation in the world and earn their freedom.

PIECES OF MASONRY

In the second part of his interview with Fighting Fantazine, writer Paul Mason recalls his *Fighting Fantasy* gamebooks.

Interview by ALEXANDER BALLINGALL

*Continuing on from the previous issue where he spoke about his start in the world of fantasy writing, **Paul Mason** turns to his writing for the* Fighting Fantasy *range and the one that got away...*

SLAVES TO THE ABYSS OF WRITING

Was *Slaves of the Abyss* the first idea you pitched to Puffin?
It was the first idea, as I recall. I don't think I have had any of my pitches shot down.

With over 30 *Fighting Fantasy* titles already published how much pressure was there to keep any adventure from being a generic dungeon romp?
No pressure from others. From myself, massive. I mean, I was hugely opposed to the whole idea of 'dungeons' in role-playing games at the time. So I wasn't about to start doing it myself.

I should add that I subsequently changed my views on dungeons, in two distinct ways. The first was, thanks to *Empire of the Petal Throne* (and specifically the game that Dave Morris and Steve Foster ran) I started to understand how dungeons could work, be compelling, even be psychologically significant, 'liminal' spaces. The second was that, more recently, my study of role-playing games at some academic distance has enabled me to realise how important dungeons were in making RPGs possible.

It's no coincidence that *The Wailing World* was conceived, essentially, as a dungeon.

You've mentioned elsewhere what you were reading at the time had an effect on what you wrote. What was the influence and has this sort of thing held true for all

Paul Mason in his younger days, circa 1995.

four of your *Fighting Fantasy* titles?
Actually I can't remember the specific title I was reading when I did *Slaves of the Abyss*. I do know I was reading a lot of Joseph Campbell, and I was particularly reading about Gnostic mysticism. Much of this was for a series of articles about religion in RPGs for my fanzine. Not that I was actually into a-less Gnosticism myself... I'm afraid I was never very good at being 'into' anything, even role-playing games, now I think about it. I was brought up a Methodist (ah, *now* we finally get the background you asked about at the beginning) but drifted out of that at the age of sixteen, mainly by means of a smart-alecky bit of thought-manipulation along the lines of:

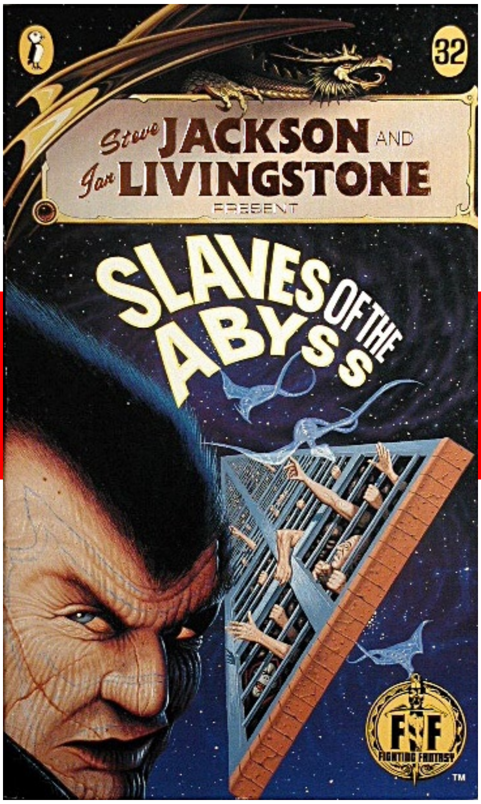
To be a Christian I must have Jesus alive in my soul.
How would I know that I have Jesus alive in my soul?
Because I would recognise the feeling.
How would I recognise the feeling?
Because it would correspond exactly to how I would expect it to feel.
But in that case, I am perfectly capable of duping myself.

> "Some fan critics have argued that this aspect is a huge flaw in the book. For me, it's pretty much the point, so in that sense the whole book counts as a flaw."

Bollocks, yes, but for the 16-year-old me this (and some stuff about dolphins that I don't remember) was enough to snap me into an agnosticism that has endured to this day. I am sympathetic to Zen Buddhism, but only insofar as superstition, gods, afterlife etc are irrelevent to it.

Anyway, for my other books, yes there was influence from what I read, but also, of course TV and film. *Black Vein Prophecy* and *The Crimson Tide* emerged out of my China fascination (though the lack of Chinese stuff in *Black Vein Prophecy* demonstrates how most of the ideas in that were Steve W's). *The Crimson Tide* was my take on the original Arnie *Conan* movie (a pattern that was so often replicated in other barbarian movies like *Beastmaster*) and was also massively influenced by tales of the Shaolin monastery. But what I wanted to do was a 'revenge' story without the catharsis of revenge being exacted, but where success comes from conquering that revenge.

Magehunter was, of course, *Warlock* (and therefore also *Terminator*), but I had really enjoyed Robert Irwin's *The Arabian Nightmare*, and that inspired me to take an Arabian twist. I think at this time I was also into the Russian formalists, and what they wrote about 'defamiliarisation' (also translated as 'estrangement'). For them, a goal of literature was making the familiar new, and original, and strange again. I couldn't aspire to those heights, but I did like the idea of revisiting the setting of *The Riddling Reaver* and *Slaves of the Abyss* but making it feel somehow different, by playing up the Middle Eastern aspects. In order to do this, I had to make the protagonist an outsider, which is why he comes from outside Titan. Some fan critics have argued that this aspect is a huge flaw in the book. For me, it's pretty much the point, so in that sense the whole book counts as a flaw.



Oh, and the scene towards the end where you enter the tower by a 'back route' which consists of getting enmeshed in stories came, I suppose from two sources. One is post-modernism in general and the acknowledgement of fictionality. The second is that I read a lot of Phillip K Dick, and it lodged in my head. I always loved the outrageous mindfuck moments (and let's face it, the revelation of what's going on in *Flow My Tears the Policeman Said* is about as outrageous as anything you're ever going to read) and I suppose Verhoeven's *Total Recall* had given me the idea that it might be possible to do this sort of thing in a relatively mainstream medium.

Was writing *Slaves* an easier or harder experience than writing the *Robin Hood* titles?
My gut reaction would be harder, as *Slaves* was the first gamebook, and so I was learning how to do it while doing it. But then with *Robin of Sherwood*, it felt like I was learning to do it all over again. I think also that, perhaps because Graham had already written quite a lot on his own, and was used to doing that, it was easier for me to collaborate with Steve W than with him.

In the book you used a method of keeping time that involved art on the inside front cover. Was that a deliberate choice on your part not to include such a device on the *Adventure Sheet*?
Yes. I think I was inspired by the work Leo Hartas had done for us in *White Dwarf*. He would be given a brief to do a 'map', but he'd come back to us with something that was a great piece of artwork in its own right. So I thought that it would be good to actually make the time element a visual component. Let's face it, as a game system it wasn't very successfully implemented. The idea of it was more to convey the sense of urgency, of time running out, and I wanted to use the image – separate from the *Adventure Sheet* – to achieve that.

Bob Harvey illustrated this title. Had you an artist in mind when writing the book and what are your thoughts on the published artwork?
As I've said, art isn't really my thing, and I've never been especially hands-on with the art side of things. I hate writing cover briefs (and a glance at the cover of *Black Vein Prophecy* should demonstrate pretty graphically why). So I had no artist in mind. As it happened I liked many of the illustrations in that book, and I thought Bob's use of large areas of black was very atmospheric.

Has there been an occasion where the art in any of your books has totally missed what you were aiming for?
Yes, I think there were. But as I wasn't very hands-on, I just had to shrug, and accept that an artist is an interpreter of the text. But examples would include the cover of *Magehunter*. I still think my wife's rough was better, and that's despite loving Ian Miller's

work.

With *Black Vein Prophecy*, there was absolutely no Chinese 'feel' to the illustration, which disappointed me, though Terry Oakes corrected that in *The Crimson Tide*. In the latter, there are minor things like the giganticism of the machinery in paragraph 290: it was described as 'intricate', but doesn't look at all intricate. I can't recall any more. It's the sort of thing that might have bothered me a little at the time, but is quickly forgotten.

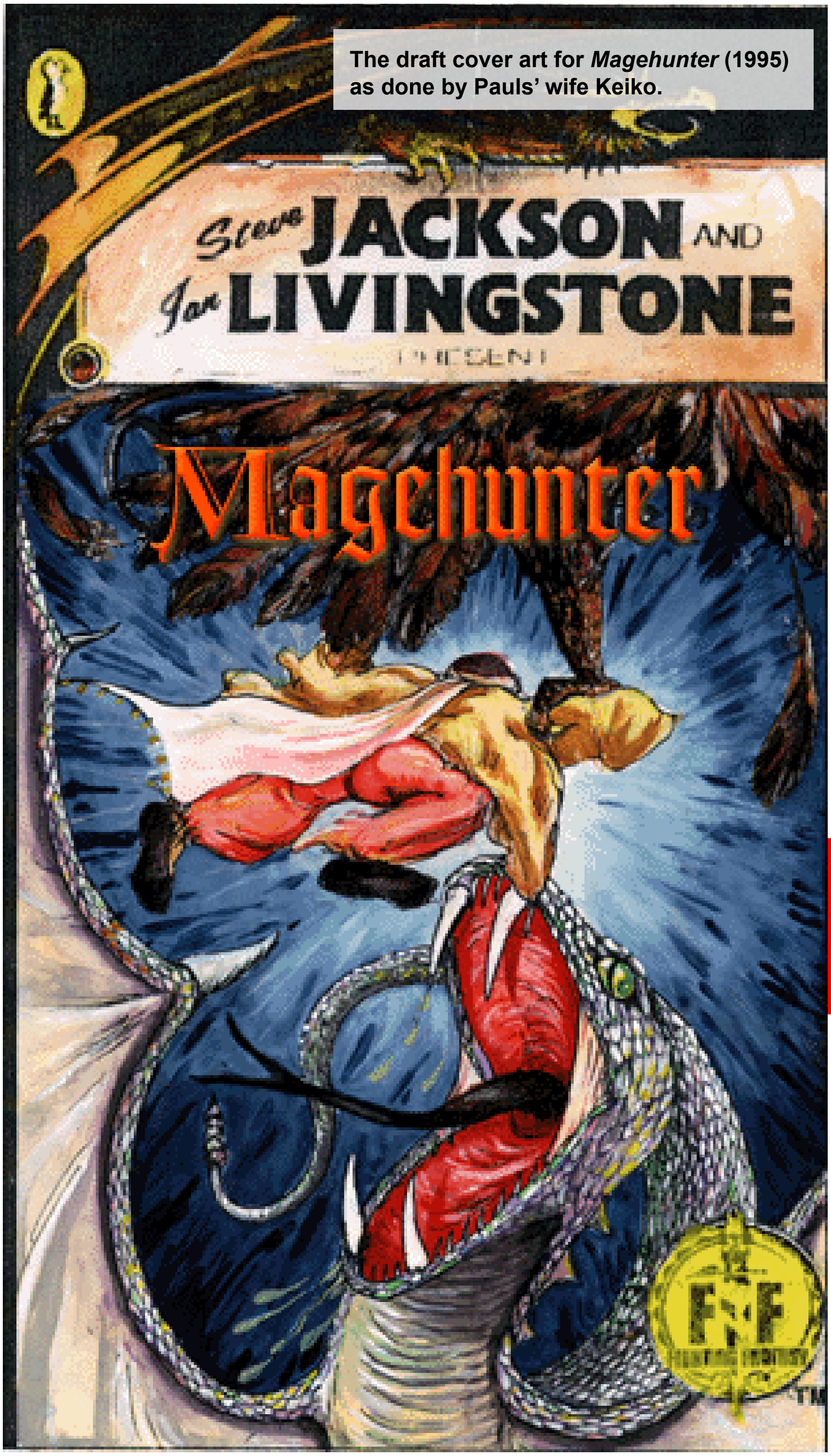
The story goes that Steve Jackson wasn't happy with the planned ending for the book. What is the reality behind that?
Well, the "story" is probably the one I told, so I'm not going to change my tune now. Steve J himself may remember it differently, of course, but I have a recollection of a letter which said that after solving all the puzzles and defeating the monsters, the Lord God Almighty should show up and shower the reader with treasure. Not that he meant that literally, of course. It's just that he was responding to the "successful" ending being one where the hero ends up stranded in the Abyss. Being pig-headed, I retained our ending, but stuck in a line about the reader basically *becoming* Lord God Almighty.

Steve J was probably right: the readership of *Fighting Fantasy* was mainly young boys, and they are not renowned for their love of self-sacrificing endings. I suspect that the reputation of *Slaves of the Abyss* nowadays derives from people being older. 'I didn't really get it when I was younger,' they say, 'But I appreciate it now.' Well, that's all fine and dandy, but not from the point of view of selling gamebooks to young boys.

But sometimes, we look back on these instances of youthful obduracy fondly. In this case, I'm afraid I do.

Have there been other instances where editorial command has required changes in the books from what you had planned?
Well, telling us we had to reduce the number of paragraphs was probably the toughest. I remember that happening a lot, though it could well have only been once, for all I know.

But actually, I don't remember any particular instances of editorially demanded changes after that one. I think for the earlier books in the series, Steve and Ian were more hands-on in supervising what they contained. But as time went by, they had other things to do, so that got left to others. My feeling was that of those 'others', Marc, for all his legendary Mudworm modification, was the one who cared most about quality in the books.



The draft cover art for *Magehunter* (1995) as done by Pauls' wife Keiko.

Art © Keiko Mason, 2013. Used with permission.

With *The Riddling Reaver* and *Slaves of the Abyss* under your belts, how did it feel to be published authors?
I liked it. In fact, when *The Riddling Reaver* was published, I bought myself a Porsche. Granted, it was a Matchbox toy, and it was by way of a parody of Steve and Ian, but all the same, it reflected genuine pleasure.

Looking back at *Slaves of the Abyss*, what is your impression of the book now? Does it still do everything you wanted it to do?
No, no, of course not. None of my books come close to doing everything I want them to do.

I should also point out that my impression of *Slaves* is coloured more than anything else by the fan comments I've read. They form a stronger impression on me than any direct experience of the book. This might seem odd, but consider, the book was written 25 years ago and I haven't read it during that time. On the other hand, I have read some very eloquently argued critiques of the book. So I'm distanced from my own work, and in many ways I know it less well than those fans who have taken the trouble to critique it. The creative process, though I may make it sound very high-fallutin here, was for me at least a rather ramshackle business. There are things in *Slaves of the Abyss* which are there for no other reason than that Steve and I basically thought they were cool or, to be honest, a good idea at the time. As I explained about the time sheet, for example: it was trying to achieve something aesthetic, but I would understand why many readers would just consider it unnecessary and annoying. Similarly, I think there are numerous ill-advised death paragraphs. I remember being quite attached to death paragraphs (no doubt there are profound psychological reasons for this, though an alternative explanation would be that they're easy to write, as you don't have to worry about options after them...). Isn't it *Slaves* that has the death paragraph that sort of jumps ahead in time and has a bloke in a market selling your sword or something... effectively referring to your death well after the fact? I've seen conflicting fan views on that, and I have to say I agree. I think the paragraph is trying to make death paragraphs interesting, but misses (as so often happens in these cases) the overarching plot: if you've failed, and Bythos's army has overwhelmed Kallamehr, then would there be a bloke in a market casually selling your sword? Wouldn't it be better to use the chance to give a graphic description of what your failure might lead to?

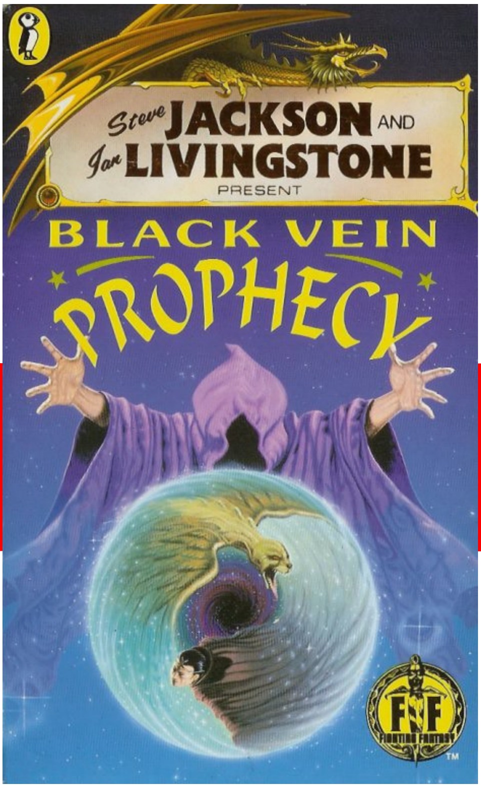
> "We wanted to dispense with the background because we thought it was a bit tedious. We wanted to start In Media Res: like James Bond falling out of a plane without a parachute."

I think I should have tried to make the death paragraphs more interesting by not having so many of them. I think I'm happier with the approach just before that paragraph, where you get to choose from three strategies, and if you stay behind you have a warning dream. I know there are some fans who dislike that, too, who think it's a bit pointless. But I would defend it as performing a dramatic function as well as giving the reader a fair in-game warning. You see similar things in film and TV all the time.

I also have a feeling that, technically, there are many flaws in the structure of the book. I didn't have a clear system for getting everything to fit together – never really managed one, in fact – so had to rely on my overall feeling, and I just couldn't keep that complex a network in my head. So, for example, I didn't do a clear analysis of varying paths through the book (this was in the age before computers, so I think I can be forgiven for not performing a full path analysis) and just had to 'guess' about its difficulty.

LOOKING BACKWARDS TO THE BLACK

***Black Vein Prophecy* uses a cold start, throwing the reader in with no "Background". What had brought about that line of thinking? Did it take much effort to win over Puffin to such a departure?**



No. No problem, though that was probably because Steve had already done *Creature of Havoc*. We're often accused of aping *Creature of Havoc*, and although I'd be the first to admit – as I just have done – that it made it possible for us to start *Black Vein Prophecy* the way we did, I don't believe we were actually copying *Creature of Havoc* at all. I say this, because neither of us had read it!

We wanted to dispense with the background because we thought it was a bit tedious. We wanted to start In Media Res: like James Bond falling out of a plane without a parachute. Clearly, one of my characteristics as an *Fighting Fantasy* author (and whether or not it's a fault depends on how you react to the books) is that I tended to get a bit impatient with the status quo. The name of *Black Vein Prophecy* is a case in point. I think I'd got a bit wound up with what I called 'The Umm of the Argh' titles, and I wanted something structurally different. Having said that, I think Steve W actually provided the words for the title. There's no reason a title has to be 'The Umm of the Argh', and I felt that 'Black Vein Prophecy' conveyed the requisite mystery, menace and mysticism.

Your first adventures were set on mainland Allansia, yet you moved to the Isles of the Dawn for this and your next book. What prompted this exploration?

The map. And, as mentioned above, the impatience with the status quo. The desire to go somewhere different, try to do something a little different. Blaze our own trail. With other writers, it took them out of *Fighting Fantasy* and into other series. With me... oh yeah, *Robin of Sherwood* and the (never-published) *Virtual Reality* gamebook. Looking back, though, I think it's more valuable to do something a little out-there in a mainstream series like *Fighting Fantasy*, than to pick up one's toys and leave for a smaller playground.

Here you moved away from the standard of paragraph 400 as the winning endpoint of the adventure. What was the purpose of this?

Same as above: wanting to go somewhere a little different. By this stage I had just begun to really start thinking about how the paragraph turning mechanism worked on an aesthetic level. And I wanted to play with expectations. The point is, when you see 'Turn to 400' you have effectively wasted a paragraph, because at that point, you know you've won. So the elation of victory comes at that point, and reading the final paragraph is perhaps a slight let down (unless Lord God Almighty shows up and showers you with treasure, of course). So I wanted to subvert that a bit.

Just me being antsy, I suppose, really.

You've noted elsewhere that you and Steve both had different conceptions of the society local to the Isles of the Dawn. Do you think this pulling in different directions was a positive or a negative for the book?

I'm the last person to ask! It wasn't so much that Steve and I had different conceptions, as that I had a conception, and Steve couldn't really be arsed to go along with it. I think it should also be said that I got a chance to express my ‘conception’ in *The Crimson Tide*, while Steve had no such chance (and it hasn’t been written elsewhere, so I’ll point out here that the reason I struck out on my own wasn’t that I didn’t want to work with Steve, but that he was busy with a successful career in advertising, whereas I was doing odd jobs to make ends meet). So whether it’s a negative or a positive could perhaps be best expressed by asking whether you like the *Black Vein Prophecy* Isles of the the Dawn or *The Crimson Tide* Isles of the Dawn. if the latter, then perhaps it was a negative. If the former, then maybe the tension was creative.

If there was one thing about this book you could change, what would it be?
Black Vein Prophecy? Only *one* thing? Well, it would have to be the cover, wouldn’t it?

By this time Marc Gascoigne had replaced Robin Waterfield as copy-editor of the range. Was there a difference in how they approached the range of books?
Robin was a professional editor. I liked him a lot, though I recall he was shocked when I told him I didn’t regard the Riddling Reaver as a villain. But his background was essentially literary.

“Maybe this was the point where I really started believing in gamebooks, as against them just being things that I got the opportunity to write.”

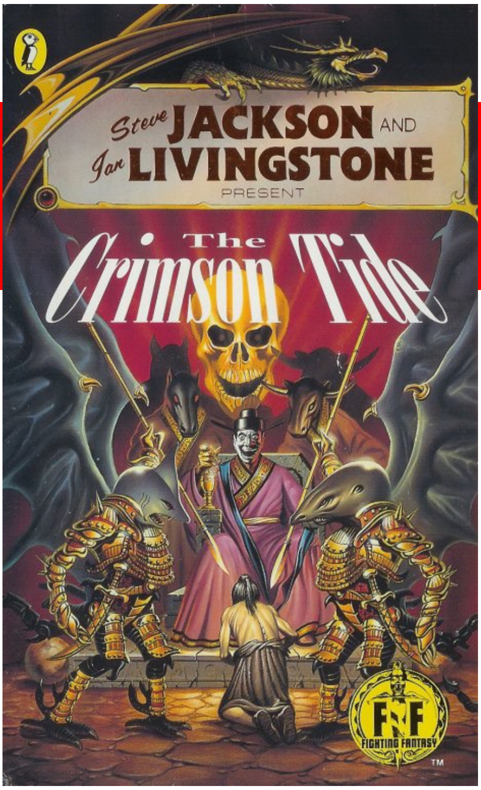
Marc was, well, I suppose I have to say he had a ‘literary’ background as he studied it at uni, but he was a gamer and former fanzine editor. His instincts were much more populist and gamer-oriented, I think. And I think his work demonstrated that those instincts were pretty good. I mean, look at *Warlock* after Marc took it over. Much less *Blue Petery*, for one thing.

By the 40s of the book range many readers feel the books had deliberately become a lot harder. Do you agree with this perception?
Yes. And I will trot out the same old excuse: it was what we understood the readers to be demanding. I had studied market research at university, so I actually had no excuse for going along with that without questioning it. Even worse, excessive difficulty actually annoyed me as a reader of gamebooks; yet rather than taking this as a useful clue, I just concluded that I was ‘different’ to the fans whose letters I’d read at *Warlock*. It didn’t occur to me that the fans who said they liked books because they were difficult were actually trying to big themselves up, rather than merely expressing a preference.

How quick was your turnaround? In other words, how long did it take for you to write each book and how long after sending in a completed book were you pitching the next one?
The answer to the first question is *bloody ages*. For a clear idea of how the process works, even for someone way, way more talented than I, I recommend Russell T Davies’ *The Writer’s Tale*. I’d long thought that the way I put things off, and tried to motivate myself to get it done was just because I wasn’t a ‘real writer’. Now it may well be that I am not a ‘real writer’, but when I read Davies’ book, the shock of recognition was intense.

So we’re talking several months to write each book. And I really can’t recall how soon I’d pitch a new one, but I think the answer was ‘as soon as I could’: in other words, as soon as I heard from Puffin that they were basically receptive to a proposal.

THE RISING TIDE OF PUBLIC OPINION



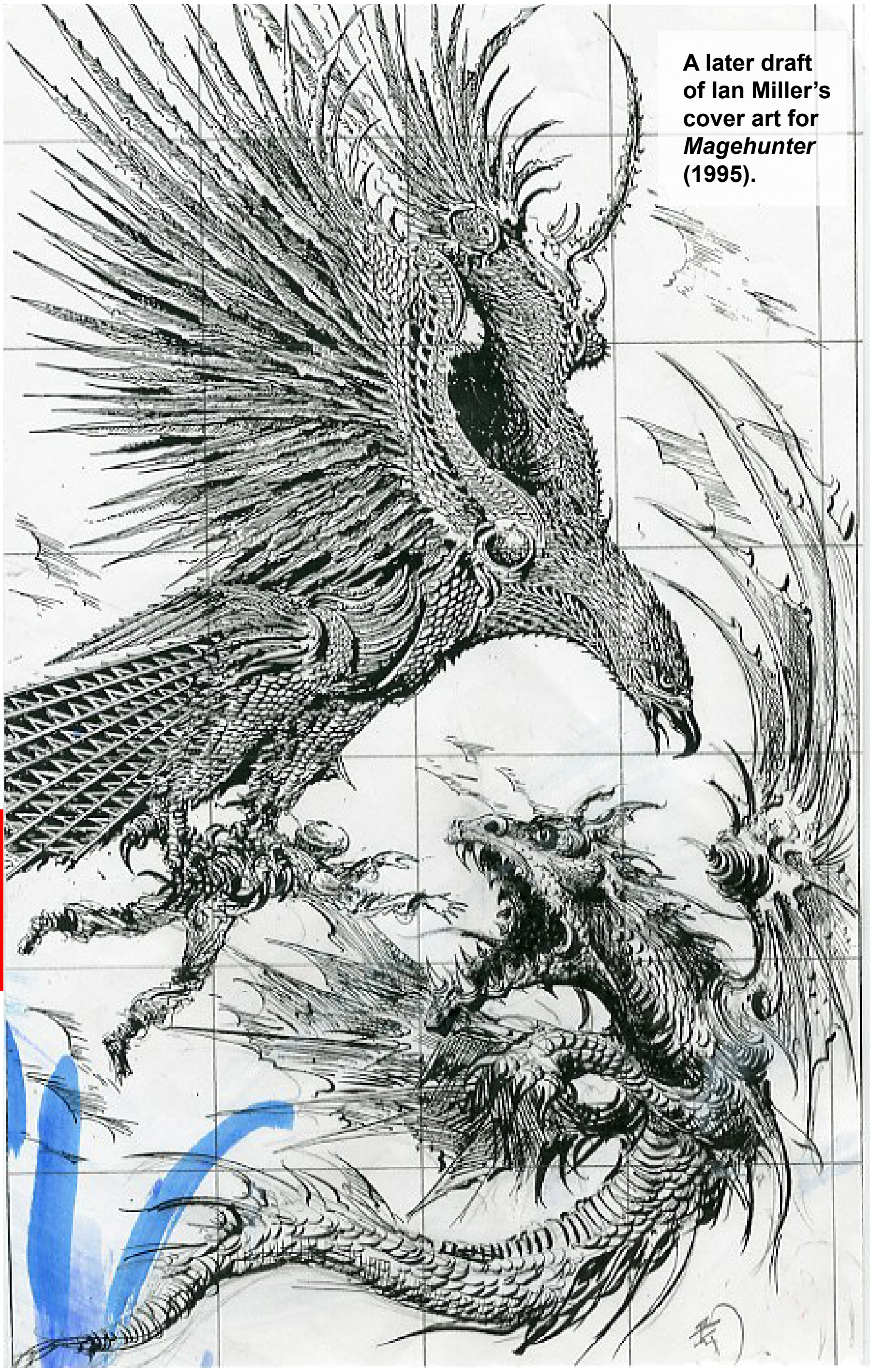
Was it always your intention in *The Crimson Tide* to have continuity links back to *Black Vein Prophecy*?
I suppose I liked that sort of thing, so yes. Oddly enough, I think back then such things were regarded as a bit nerdy. But nowadays, that’s how the majority of media franchises work: the fans love a good continuity reference!

***The Crimson Tide* moves away from the one correct ending of your earlier titles. Was this a deliberate trend towards a less black and white world view?**
Well, I’d always had a less black and white world view (hence my view of the Riddling Reaver being that the Reaver is the real hero, as he wants to abolish simple categories of black and white), but yes, it was where I felt that I could try and make that view more explicitly part of the book. Maybe this was the point where I really started believing in gamebooks, as against them just being things that I got the opportunity to write.

In your mind which ending of *The Crimson Tide* is the best and why?
I don’t remember all the endings. But I’m fairly sure my favourite is the one where you just stay in the monastery and forget all about the idea of getting revenge. In other words, you get on with your life. I wrote that thinking that it would be viewed as a strange sort of ‘death paragraph’, and that made me smile.

What was the inspiration behind starting the hero of the book at age 13?
Nothing impressive, I’m afraid. That was how the barbarian movies from which I nicked the central idea always started. The tearstained kid staring through the flames of his devastated village... And I just thought, why not go for that? Wouldn’t it be interesting for once to have the hero being closer to the age of the target reader, and have him grow up in the course of the adventure? Which suggested to me also that it might be interesting to telescope time drastically compared to other books. *Slaves* was a race against time, whereas *The Crimson Tide* can take place over many years.

The encounter with the Mudworm early on in the adventure has always been seen a large error by fans. What were/are your thoughts on the offending encounter then and now?
A mountain out of a mudworm hill. I suppose at the time I found it annoying in the sense that anyone whose work is fiddled with does – especially because it suggested a lack of attention being paid to the whole ‘aged 13 therefore lower SKILL’ premise. Nowadays I’m more sanguine about it. In retrospect, the inverted roll with Death’s Messenger (which is my fault, not Marc’s) is probably more of an error. Probably the thing which annoys me the most is that it



A later draft of Ian Miller's cover art for *Magehunter* (1995).

Art © Ian Miller, 2013. Used with permission. Visit ian-miller.org

may have given the impression that I have a grudge against Marc, which I certainly don't, and never have. I've always had the utmost respect for Marc's abilities.

Are you able to explain the contents of Alan Craddock's cover art which has baffled many?

Yeah, sure. I thought there was a bit about it in the text? If not, there was probably a section that got cut. It's the Tribunal of the Dead. The judge, in the middle, is akin to the Yama King (Enma in Japanese). On either side are demons occupying the places of the guards of the tribunal, whose job is to keep the prisoner in line and administer corporal punishment if necessary. So the cover depicts the soul being judged for his actions while alive which is, of course, the theme of the book.

Had you developed a favourite *Fighting Fantasy* artist by this point?

No, not at all. Though I have to say in retrospect that I really like and admire John Blanche. He never illustrated any of my books, but he was very kind to me, and he did let me have a couple of his pieces as covers for my fanzine.

How much contact did you have with other writers on the range?

Marc I knew from RPG fandom: he was one of the editors of *DragonLords* (with Ian Marsh and Mike Lewis), which I contributed to. And of course, I worked with him briefly at GW. Some of my most prized items in my record collection derived from joint shopping trips to record shops with Marc: he really knew his stuff about music. Who else is there? Jon Sutherland did gamebooks, but he never did *Fighting Fantasy*, did he? So I'd have to go back to the White Dwarf 'old guard'. When I started at *White Dwarf*, Ian would tell stories about his former boss Lord Dong – Ian had been assistant to Jamie Thomson. So I knew of Jamie by reputation. While I was at GW I think I went to a party at his place. A couple of years later I was meeting Jamie every week because he was in Dave Morris's *Empire of the Petal Throne* game (along with Mark Smith, and Oliver Johnson come to that). My boss at Games Workshop was Peter Darvill-Evans, a nice bloke whom I treated with the cheek and disrespect typical of the sort of young upstart I was. Peter of course went on to run the *Doctor Who* line at Virgin, and even gave me one of them to copy-edit on one occasion.

While I was at GW, Ian Marsh and I used to go up to Aylesbury for games weekends with Pete Tamlyn, who we got to do stuff for *White Dwarf*, and who worked with Marc on *Advanced Fighting Fantasy*. Robin Waterfield I knew because he'd worked as editor. I knew of Jon Green, as I seem to recall he started to work under Marc at GW, but I never met him (I was probably in Japan by this time). Once I came to Japan, my contact dried up to seeing Dave Morris every other year or so, though I did meet Marc at the Glasgow Worldcon.

Oh, and the other two writers on the series I forgot to mention were Ian Livingstone and Steve Jackson. When I was at GW, they'd drift in occasionally, and now and again even say something to me. At first, my contact was mainly with Steve. I'm now forming the suspicion that he actually asked Steve W to write what became *The Riddling Reaver*. So I owe my whole writing career to the fact that Steve W basically allowed me along for the ride. Later after I left GW, my contact was with Ian Livingstone, because he got chummy with Brian Walker, the editor of a magazine called *Games International* (subsequently *Strategy Plus*) on which I was production editor. Ian was into those neat German boardgames, which the mag covered well. Around this time, Steve Jackson's *F.I.S.T.* telephone game had taken off, and Ian was lined up to do one. I did a simple War of Wizards game for him, and then pitched a

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THE WAILING WORLD

Text © Paul Mason, 2013

PROLOGUE

'This must be kept absolutely secret, do you understand? We four are the only ones who are aware of the Prince's disappearance. We cannot afford to allow the news to leak out.'

Garsa fixes you with his cold grey eyes, nervously fingering the serpent and sword brooch on his opulent silk jacket, but you stare placidly back at him. These bureaucrats, they always take themselves so seriously. To Garsa and his two cronies from the Grand Council, this is a matter of the utmost importance, and that makes their palms sweaty and their voices strained. To you, however, it's a job. Some crazy has managed to kidnap Prince Lakmeer at a critical point in the city-state's negotiations with its neighbour Marad. He has to be returned safe and sound, without word getting out. That means employing someone who is very good at such specialised forms of work, and thanks to your reputation the council have settled on you.

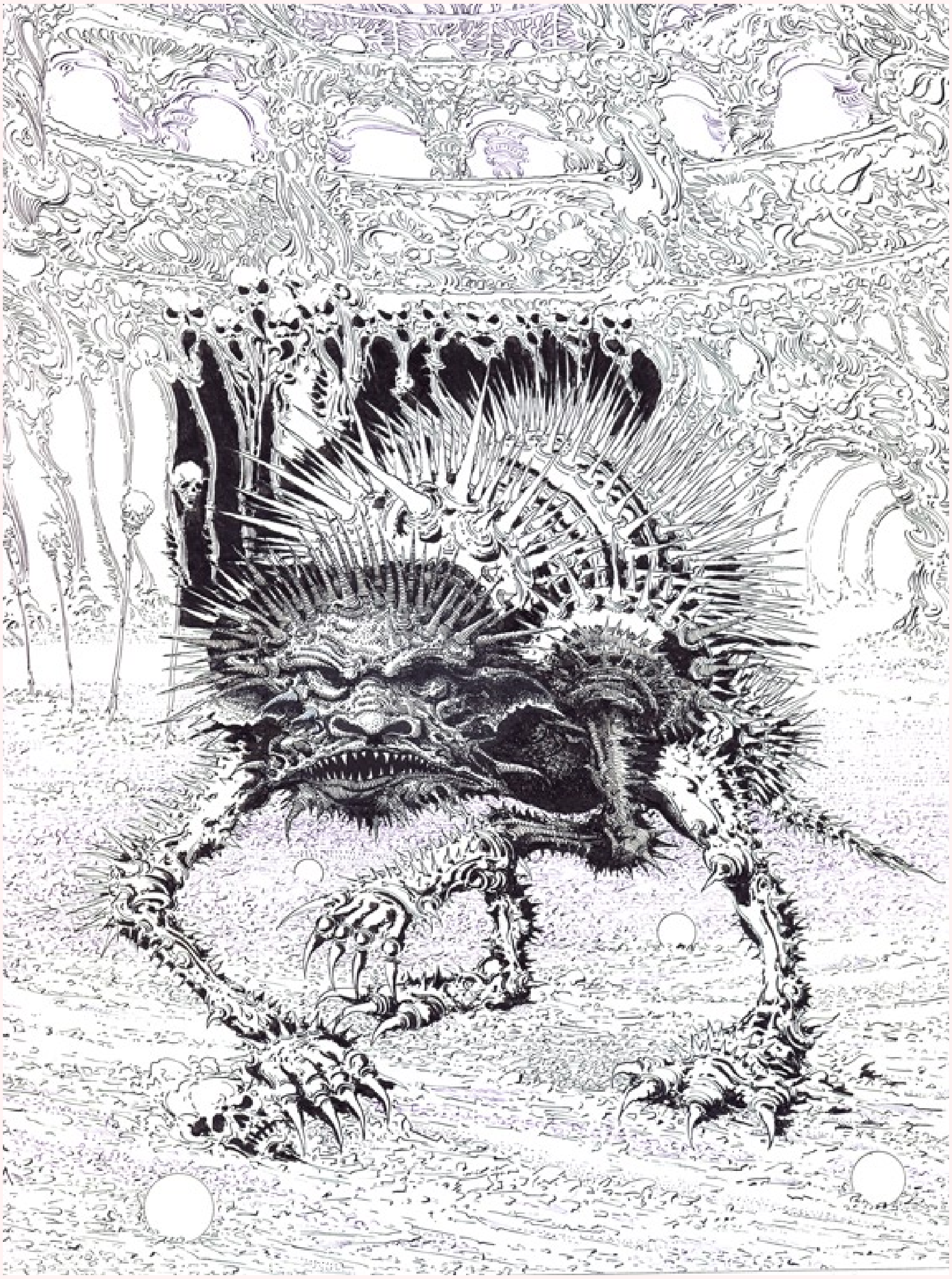
Of course, the pay is very good. You already have a small pouch containing diamonds enough to buy yourself a nice home – say, a castle. And there's the promise of two more like it if you get the Prince back in one piece. Of course, it's pretty dangerous. The crazy in question is reputed to be a wizard, a renegade from the Mage Council, and if he managed to spirit the Prince out of the palace he must be pretty competent. But that's what makes your job so well-paid. That's what makes it exciting, and that's why you're a hero.

'He'll be back here within two days,' you tell Garsa. 'Have my diamonds ready.'

'We'll have everything ready for you. Don't worry,' he replies. You stand up and make your way out of this dingy rented room and into the bright sun of the plaza.

SYNOPSIS

The story begins with the reader (hereafter referred to as the hero) having been



Ian Miller's incomplete draft cover art for *Magehunter* (1995). According to Paul: "That was the draft cover for *Magehunter* based on my brief, which came from paragraph 394. The trouble is, paragraph 394 had its own illustration, and Russ's Spike Fiend bore no similarity to Ian's Spike Fiend. I also felt, looking at it, that it simply didn't represent the feel of the book in any way. I had been trying to specify a cover based on a sort of 'What kind of cover would Steve and Ian choose?' way of thinking, and really, false modesty aside, I'm crap at that. So I had to apologise and reject that draft. Then come up with a new cover idea. For this one I talked with my wife, and the mid-air combat seemed suitable. She then did a rough to give an idea of the sort of thing we wanted [see page 18].

As I say, I felt guilty rejecting Ian Miller's rough, for reasons that were basically down to my own incompetence. So I started thinking that it would make a good cover for my next book. I started imagining these creatures dwelling far, far beneath the earth, in a realm where they were sustained by the droning of mighty organs which generated vibrations in their spines. I think at that point I thought 'The Wailing World' would make a good title (I obviously had Ballard in mind)."

Art © Ian Miller, 2013. Used with permission. Visit ian-miller.org

employed by the ministers of Lagash to rescue the Prince of the City-state. The Prince has been kidnapped by a mad sorcerer, whose tower is conveniently located a short walk from the City-state. The job seems relatively simple.

The first section of the story concerns the hero's preparations in the city. Although it is possible to head straight for the tower, this will lead relatively quickly to a death paragraph if adequate preparation has not been made. Within the city, the hero has plenty of opportunity for equipment acquisition and information gathering. Four powerful magic items may be purchased with the diamonds which the hero received as down payment for the job. All of them are potentially useful, though two in particular, the Trumpet of Transport and the Dagger of Deception, make the subsequent adventure considerably easier.

While in the city it is possible for the hero to pick up some important information. One is that the city walls of Lagash are magically enchanted. They are designed not just to keep enemies out, but to keep the inhabitants of the city in. Using the trumpet of transport to attempt to teleport out of the city is fatal because of this, something that can be discovered at this stage (albeit in a death paragraph). Another piece of information concerns the intentions of the ministers who hired the hero. A lucky hero may discover that they are setting up an ambush at the arranged rendezvous point, so that even if the hero succeeds at the mission, mortal danger still awaits.

The second section of the book concerns the raid on the tower. This is easier than it might be, as most of the defences are magical in nature. As long as the hero hasn't foolishly mislaid the magical talisman which is provided at the beginning, the physical opponents should provide little difficulty. In the tower, however, the hero may discover that the Prince hasn't been kidnapped. Unfortunately, the Prince has settled on the 'mad sorcerer' as his guru, much to the sorcerer's embarrassment. It is possible just to steam in, kill the sorcerer and take the prince back (though the prince will protest, he won't put up any serious opposition). A conversation with the sorcerer may reveal alternatives, and gives the hero the opportunity to learn of The Wailing World, a subterranean realm which the sorcerer has recently discovered and wishes to explore further.

However the matter in the tower goes, if the hero survives, a warm welcome awaits in the city. The ministers don't wish word of the prince's "abduction" to leak out so all witnesses (in other words, the hero) must be eliminated. This is probably the most deadly part of the book as the hero must evade a number of dangerous pursuers. It is here that it becomes evident that the whole city of Lagash is a gigantic prison. With the gates closed, there is apparently no escape for our poor hero ... except one. The Wailing World. If the hero has learned how to reach it magically from the sorcerer, or takes the wild step of pointing the Trumpet of Transport down (pointing it up or at any of the city walls leads to death), then the sole escape route becomes clear. But this is, of course, a case of out of the frying pan into the fire. The Wailing World is so named because of the constant droning sound which fills it. This sound (which comes in various pitches, providing a clue to help the hero out) is required as sustenance by the Wailing World's spike-covered inhabitants, but it has the unfortunate effect of gradually driving a human exposed to it stark raving mad. The Wailing World is therefore a maze, but a maze with a race against time. It is up the hero whether he decides to try to befriend or attack the creatures of the Wailing World.

One possible solution to the problem of the droning is to destroy the Organs which create it. This will have the unfortunate side-effect of causing the genocide of the Wailing World's creatures, so it is probably not to be recommended (as the creatures of the Wailing World are enemies of the Dark Elves, and their loss would upset the delicate balance which holds the Dark Elves in check).

Alternatively the hero will have to work out a way to find another exit from the tunnels, ideally by judging from the tones produced by the Organ (these are signalled by one digit in the paragraph number, though this will not be explicitly stated anywhere in the book - it's left for the reader to infer).

The plot for this book is somewhat shorter than those of previous books, to accommodate the reduced number of paragraphs. Combat and death paragraphs occur preponderantly in the earlier sections: within the city and in the attack on the tower. The later section, which takes place in the Wailing World, is primarily a puzzle/maze, with relatively few death paragraphs (though with the time limit of going mad). Although the spiky creatures of the Wailing World appear pretty fearsome, they are not innately disposed to violence. If the hero makes some effort to show goodwill, they may be enlisted to help. However, communication is impossible (the creatures don't use sound as language) so this doesn't produce the whole solution.

The book is rounded off with an opportunity for the hero to visit a well-deserved revenge on the minister who set the whole thing up.

21 ◂ *Star Trek*-themed game. But the furore caused by kids running up huge telephone bills basically closed all that down.

Since then I've had a couple of letters from Steve J, telling me that he's handling residual foreign income from *Fighting Fantasy* books, and nothing else.

ON THE HUNT FOR SOMETHING DIFFERENT

In something of a reversal to Peter Darvill-Evans' *Spectral Stalkers*, *Magehunter* has the hero arrive on Titan from another world. Is this another step in pursuing the 'estrangement' idea mentioned earlier?

It's the heart of that idea. The implication, I hoped, was that the Magehunter comes from our own world, albeit a fictional version of it (in other words, I knew that the *Warlock* reference would be noticed, and I wanted to use that association). So it's not only 'Kallamehr viewed by an outsider to Kallamehr' but 'Titan viewed by an outsider to Titan'.

One theory I have is that some *Fighting Fantasy* readers are such 'insiders' to Titan that they felt uncomfortable experiencing it as an 'outsider'.

What can you explain about the dedication (to the Kiriyama family & Kiyoshi-san)?

When I came to Japan to live, I stayed with them before finding my apartment. It was arranged by the city board of education, my employers at the time. The Kiriyamas were exceptionally kind to me. The specific reference to Kiyoshi-san (my 'host father') is because he lent me the computer on which I wrote the book.

I'm still in touch with them. Actually went round to their house for a barbecue a couple of weeks ago.

If you could have had any artist illustrate one of your books, who would it be and which title?

This may be the most difficult question you've asked. I'm not entirely satisfied with my answer, but I think I would say that I would have liked to have John Blanche illustrate *Black Vein Prophecy*. The reason for that is not only that I think John is a great artist, and an exceptionally kind man, but that the art that he did for his own pleasure has a fantastic sense of the weird that I think would be really good for *Black Vein Prophecy*. I should point out that John not only forgave me for nicking his work and using it on the cover of my fanzine: he later actually provided me with two pieces which I used on my covers. I like those two much more than the 'commercial' material John did for *Warhammer*.

The book opens with a treatise on mage hunting. What was the reasoning behind such a novel step?
To make the connection with the movie *Warlock* pretty explicit. To establish from the off that this was a different logic to the established Titan logic. To play up the more 'Malleus Maleficarum' way of viewing magic.

You gave the hero a gun in this adventure as opposed to a sword. Any particular reason why?
I think guns are shunned in fantasy for rather odd reasons. Historically, guns came in during the high medieval age, and most 'fantasy' technology is high medieval. Yet guns... they seem to be thought of by readers as 'modern' in a way that doesn't seem to be the case with, say, 'books'.

So it's part of the estrangement. I also like the apparent incongruity of using guns in a 'magical' way, akin to the silver bullet needed to kill a werewolf.

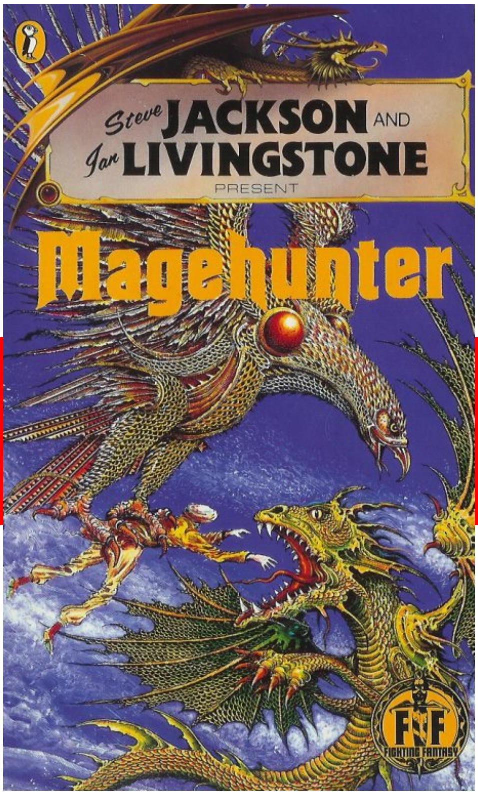
Many readers see a Middle Eastern influence on the adventure. Was this a deliberate borrowing and if so, for what reason?
Well, the Middle Eastern influence was there from the start in *The Riddling Reaver*. So yes, it was absolutely deliberate. I would say the reason here, as in *The Riddling Reaver* (and this also covers my use of China in *Black Vein Prophecy* and *The Crimson Tide*) is to be able to avoid writing vanilla fantasy. I grew up reading *The Lord of the Rings*, *Conan*, Fritz Leiber and plenty of other fantasy, but I felt that they had distinctive atmospheres which were undermined when they were just mashed up together into '*Dungeons & Dragons* fantasy'.

Now there are ways of getting a distinctive feel in your fantasy, of course, but I opted for the easiest – at least, what I would now identify as the easy option, though I don't think I saw it in those terms at the time. That was to choose a tradition that was clearly fantasy writing – that is what the *1001 Nights* is, of course – yet which isn't 'sword & sorcery'. Of course, it was mostly warped in the direction of sword & sorcery in the books, but all the same, it makes things a little different. And that was what I wanted. Maybe by the time I got to write *Fighting Fantasy* books I'd just read too much fantasy?

In any case, my instinct was always to warp and twist away from the default. Not massively – I'm not claiming to be any kind of radical, and certainly not an innovator – but just enough to satisfy my desire for difference.

> "In any case, my instinct was always to warp and twist away from the default. Not massively ... but just enough to satisfy my desire for difference."

The *Fighting Fantasy* range had almost ended with book 50. How aware were you that support for the series at Puffin was no longer so sure as it had been?
Very aware. I think with each book I'd had to submit a larger number of paragraphs before getting the contract. Moreover, the editorial lunches (one of my favourite bits of the whole experience) had vaporised – though that may also have been partly a result of the whole Salman Rushdie security scare at Penguin. And the general vibe I was getting – including from Marc G, who you may remember I knew from before either of us entered the 'pro' world – was that the series was inevitably winding down.



What do you think are the reasons behind the demise of the Puffin range?
They never liked it. When I started writing the books, the impression I got was that Puffin was staffed with former Roedean girls (ie from Britain's most famous private girls' school) who would be happiest if they spent their time producing books about ponies. That is almost certainly unfair. Also probably unfair is my impression that Richard Scrivener, who took over as series editor, owed his meteoric rise within the company largely to the fact that *Fighting Fantasy* was actually a pretty good earner, which the aforementioned Roedean girls had been reluctant to get to grips with.

However, *Fighting Fantasy* was lowbrow, fantasy, game-related and aimed at adolescent boys. Not something in those days to set the hearts of Puffin executives racing. Inevitably, sales declined. Any craze hits a peak and then declines. And even if it's still making good money, that makes it much easier to argue for cutting it. I suppose I'd compare it with *Doctor Who*. The viewing figures for the Colin Baker period were much lower than the show in its prime (never mind the scheduling decisions, or other impositions from above) and so it was possible for those who didn't like the show (and that's something Michael Grade has never denied) to argue for its cancellation.

LAMENT OF THE UNPUBLISHED BOOK

When did you pitch *The Wailing World* to Puffin?
I would say late 1995 or early 1996.

What were your goals with this, your fifth main series title?
Firstly, to do a book that matched the cover rough Ian Miller had done [see page 22]. Secondly, to find a way of doing a 'dungeon' story in a way that satisfied me. Thirdly, to have a slightly more 'fairy-tale' approach to magic. Also to have my typical gimmick (the paragraph numbers were going to be used as a code to the structure of the Wailing World so that inferring the code would help you navigate your way).

And, now that I reflect on it, to actually do a 'vanilla' fantasy story.

And to try to cope with the reduced number of paragraphs that Puffin seemed to think were essential...

What can you tell us about the adventure?
I think the synopsis pretty well covers it. I was aiming to have fewer death paragraphs, though that would have partly been made up for by 'going mad' paragraphs, since that was the threat posed by the organs of the Wailing World.

Did you actually make a start on writing it or was it all simply planning?
Oh, there are some paragraphs. Had to be. As I said, by this stage they wanted a quarter of the book before they'd offer a contract.

Did you have any other ideas for potential *Fighting Fantasy* adventures?

I can't remember anything that leaps to mind. My books were generally stimulated by relatively minor things (*Conan* movies, *Warlock*) which I would then try to whip up into a frothy mousse of the sort that always gets savaged by the judges on the Great British Menu TV programme in Britain.

Were you ever tempted to try your hand at a *Fighting Fantasy* novel?

No. There didn't seem much likelihood I'd be offered one. I'd never written a novel at that stage, and didn't have the confidence I could. Now, of course, I have written a novel – a historical Chinese detective story – but my agent's failure to find a publisher for it suggests that my lack of confidence was justified.

Would you like to see your books republished as part of the current *Fighting Fantasy* series?

I would be quite happy to do so, given a fair deal. (My definition of fair deal in these circumstances comprises 'being paid a royalty, while retaining copyright'.)

If offered the opportunity, would you write for the *Fighting Fantasy* series again?

Again, it would depend on the fair deal. It would also depend on how my work was going. I don't mind spending time answering these questions (actually it's rather therapeutic and, to be honest, I like *Fighting Fantasy* fans more than I like RPG fans: maybe I just antagonised too many of the latter?). But I am at the same time teaching a full load of classes, producing an academic journal, producing a handbook for an academic conference, writing a paper for said academic journal, writing two papers for two other academic journals, and contemplating the various departmental/faculty materials that I have responsibility for producing. On top of which I have a ten-year-old son who is being subject to the worst tortures of modern Japanese 'educational' life, and I have to try to find some way of ameliorating that. So I have rather less free time than I did back in the 80s, that's for sure.

And I almost forgot to mention the two narration jobs I have coming up in the next week. Anyone who worked at a Mazda dealership in Europe in the last 15 years has probably been subject to my dulcet tones, the poor sods. Now if only the Japanese were less wedded to American voices...

Can you sum up your overall feeling about the *Fighting Fantasy* series/universe?

Probably not. Certainly I now have fond memories. But I have to be honest and recollect that I started in the world of *Fighting Fantasy* with an attitude that bordered on contempt. The review of *Shadow in the Sand* which I printed in an issue of my fanzine rather summed up my attitude to all gamebooks in 1984: they weren't role-playing proper, and thus they were beneath my attention. As I wrote them, my attitude changed drastically, and I started to get more intrigued by the possibilities I saw. Not the most obvious ones, necessarily (the forking paths, which had even been done by the likes of Calvino), but things like convergence: the way that meaning was constructed differently based on prior experience.

In a way, for *Fighting Fantasy* I think I'd prefer it didn't have the 'Whoniverse' tendency, though I know all those Titan fans will hate me for this. What I mean is that I'd be happier to see *Fighting Fantasy* as just a range of fantasy books without such a hard tie-in to a branded background. That, after all, was how it worked in the early days. Titan was a later imposition. In a way, you can see *Magehunter* as a plea for writers not to have to make continuity a fundamental characteristic of their work. Even though I am a bit of a continuity nut (bringing back Isles of the Dawn plus characters, bringing back Kallamehr).

What things does a gamebook need to do right for it to be considered a successful adventure?

For me it's all in the tension. Turning to paragraphs, the key action in gamebooks, carries in itself a feeling of tension. A successful gamebook is one which exploits that tension to drive the adventure. You turn to paragraph 264, speculating on what is going to be the result of your action... and the contents of paragraph 264 interact in some way with your expectations, both to create an emotional response at that point, and to move the overall narrative forward.

The 'overall narrative' is tricky, because it's beyond the control of the author (because of the multiple alternatives and the complexity they generate). This, for me, is one of the most exciting things about gamebooks – the way the plot is actually largely emergent. That's why I say *Magehunter* is my favourite of my books, even though I know it rubbed a lot of readers up the wrong way. When I say it's my favourite, I'm saying that as a reader. Normally, reading my books is 'spoiled' by the fact that I know what is going on, but with *Magehunter*, there were times when I felt the story was 'out of my control' – I was experiencing something that I hadn't consciously written. And I liked that.

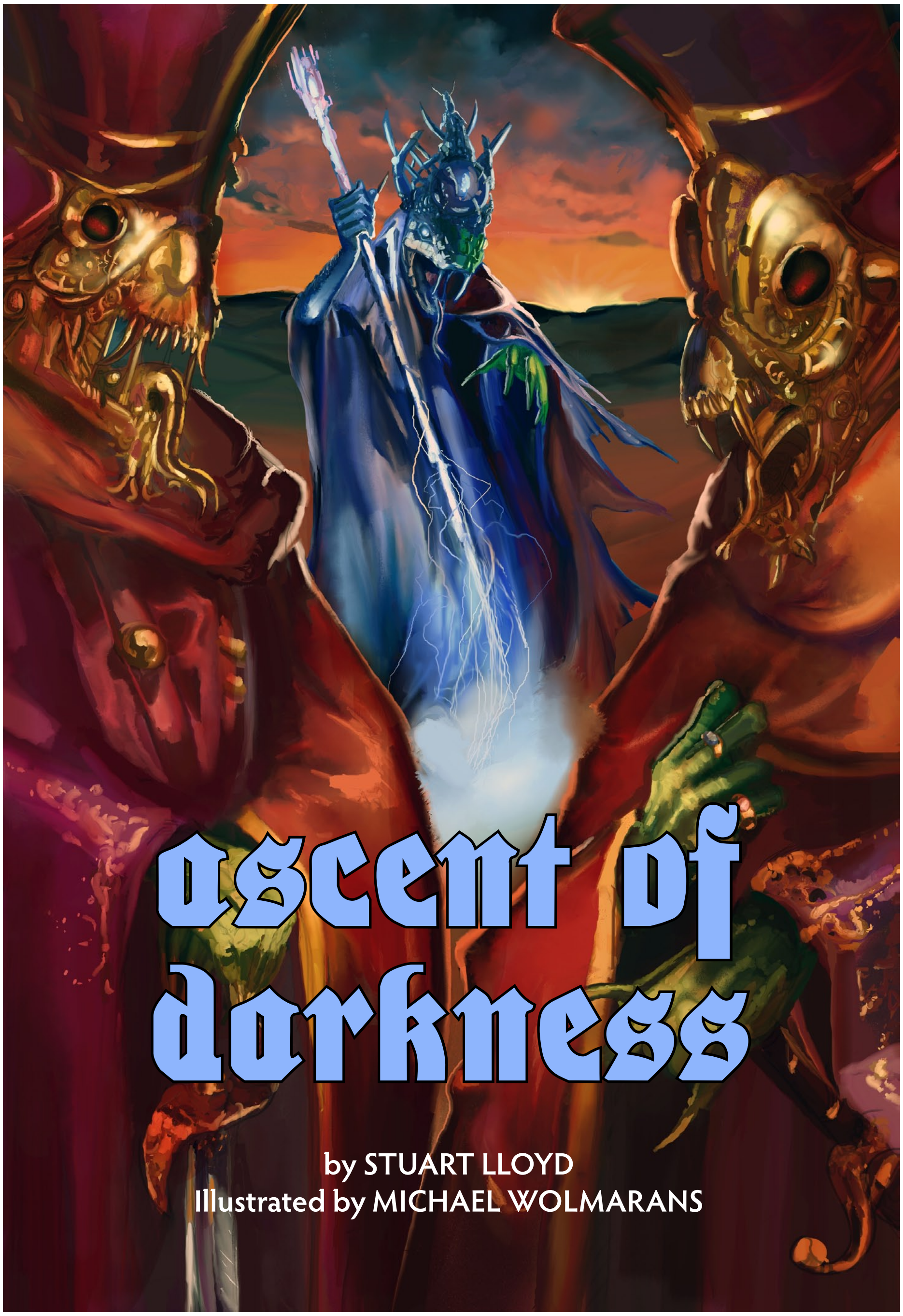
Nowadays I'd say that multiple endings are a necessity (Dave Morris just wrote about this on his blog about his recent *Frankenstein* gamebook/ebook). And trying to make the multiple paths as complex and semiotically 'thick' as possible. By this I mean that you try to make it so that multiple paths actually feel different, even if they share a number of nodes, by manipulating the context and expectations so that similar or identical passages can have radically different readings.

And finally to literally address the word in the question: to be a successful 'adventure' as against a successful work. I think an adventure has to take you somewhere. 'It's been a journey' has become one of the great (ie awful) reality TV cliches of the age. But I think an adventure, whether it's 'there and back again' (*The Hobbit*, Campbell's hero journey), or just 'there...' has to involve something new. Some sense that you are going somewhere different, learning something new, transforming in some way. That was why I so got into the 'estrangement' I was on about earlier. And it's also something I've tried to put into practice in my own life. Coming to Japan in 1991 was an adventure. It's one I don't regret, and I'd say it still is an adventure. Certainly I'm still having to make choices...

Steve JACKSON AND
Ian LIVINGSTONE
PRESENT
THE
WAILING WORLD
F:F
FIGHTING FANTASY

Mockup by Alexander Ballingall. Art: © Ian Miller, 2013. Used with permission.

> "...to find a way of doing a 'dungeon' story in a way that satisfied me [and] to have a slightly more 'fairy-tale' approach to magic."



ascent of darkness

by STUART LLOYD
Illustrated by MICHAEL WOLMARANS

HOW TO FIGHT THE ENEMIES OF CARSEPOLIS

You are one of Carsepolis's foremost warriors and have won many a victory in battle against the forces of Chaos. You are currently fighting the Caarth on the northern border of the Desert of Skulls, when a shocking message recalls you home…

Skill, Stamina and Luck

Roll 1 die. If you roll a 1~3, your *Initial* SKILL is 9. If you roll a 4~6, your *Initial* SKILL is 10.

Roll one die. Add 13 to this number and enter this to the STAMINA box on your *Adventure Sheet*.

Roll 1 die. If you roll a 1~3, your *Initial* LUCK is 9. If you roll a 4~6, your *Initial* LUCK is 10.

Heroic Powers and Heroic Flaws

Being a mighty warrior, you have great power which you have honed to almost inhuman levels. However, like all mighty legends, you have a flaw, a weakness which may bring your downfall.

You need to select one *Heroic Power* and add it to your *Adventure Sheet*. Your *Heroic Power* also modifies one of your *Initial* scores.

You also need to choose one *Heroic Flaw* and enter it in your *Adventure Sheet*.

Heroic Powers

Strength of Telak

It is as if the god of war blessed you himself. You have proved your strength and endurance to your comrades by fighting a battle that lasted for three days without stopping, even for sleep. You also smashed the gates of an Orc mountain city so that your soldiers could enter it and slaughter all of the foul beasts. No man has challenged you to a wrestling match for a decade now as you crushed the last one by accident.

Stat change: Increase *Initial* STAMINA by 6.

Speed of Pangara

Your agility and running ability is legendary. You have been told that the god of winds has blessed you. Tales of your exploits have travelled far. You once ran so fast that you managed to run across the sea to apprehend a pirate captain who was trying to escape Carsepolis by boat. You also managed to leap across a chasm to slay Goblin archers who had tried to ambush your men. No galloping horse can match your pace or your endurance, and your quickness makes you more deadly in combat.

Stat change: Increase *Initial* SKILL by 1.

Cunning of Logaan

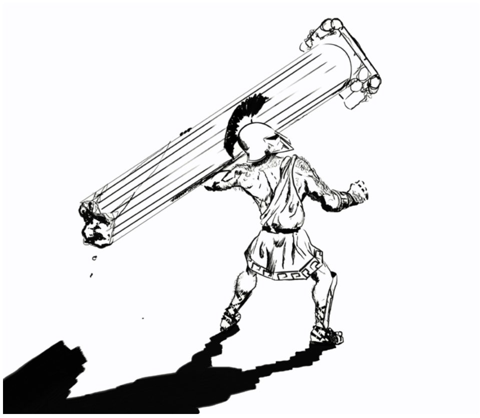
They say that you were blessed by the tricksters themselves. Your rhetoric convinces even the most stubborn of men and your quick wits surprise even the most prepared of your foes. You defeated a mighty hydra without laying a single blow on it. You weaved and ducked until its seven heads were all knotted together and it suffocated to death, unable to draw air into its lungs. When you were captured by the Orcs, you told them that your name was Nobody. Upon escaping from your cell, you walked unmolested to the exit of the city as the soldiers sat around because your jailer was frantically shouting 'Nobody has escaped!' An idea of yours also ended the siege of Castle Dracos, a fortress ruled over by a cruel warlord. You left a hollow wooden dragon outside the castle, with soldiers inside it. When your foe's men brought the dragon in, your soldiers opened the gates at night, allowing your army to sneak into the castle and slay all of its inhabitants. They also say that you can escape any danger presented to you, if not by your wits, then by your extraordinary luck. Some even say that Logaan himself is watching over you, preserving you for a mighty task.

Stat change: Increase *Initial* LUCK by 2.

Heroic Flaws

Hubris

Your abilities are outmatched only by your arrogance. On too many occasions, your reach has exceeded your grasp, leading you to place yourself and your friends in danger. Many men have lost their lives because of your desire for even greater glory. You also have a tendency for boastfulness at banquets which can disgust your fellow diners or lead you into duels. Fortunately for you, you have won them all so far, but you have to be careful that you do not one day pick a foe who outmatches you in skill.



Rage

You harbour a great anger within you. Most of the time, with your heroic will, you keep it in check. But sometimes, when you are weaker from wine or from taunts, it will arise in you. The red mist will descend and you lose control of yourself, attacking both friend and foe. Even your allies fear you for your berserk rages and some refuse to march with you into battle. This has made finding friends a lot harder, and some lesser men may flee at the sight of you. A cunning foe may be able to use your rage against you by making you lose control and therefore making you more vulnerable.

Achilles' Heel

It was prophesied that one day, the Gods will guide a blow that will fell you, even if it is the weakest blow that will merely give a lesser man a flesh wound. This has not caused you to shirk battle; rather you

ascent of darkness adventure sheet

SKILL
INITIAL SKILL =

STAMINA
INITIAL STAMINA =

LUCK
INITIAL LUCK =

GOLD

EQUIPMENT

CODEWORDS AND NOTES

HEROIC STUNTS

	ROLL 4~6	3~6
Shield Bash		
Flurry of Blows		
Exploit Weakness		

HEROIC POWER

Strength of Telak	
Speed of Pangara	
Cunning of Logaan	

HEROIC FLAW

Hubris	
Rage	
Achilles' Heel	

figure that it makes you more invulnerable to danger. You don't really care much for the gods, but if it is true and they have prepared a special death for you, they will spare you until then. When you fight opponents similar to you in heroic stature, they may be able to kill you if they roll a high enough Attack Strength and hit you. If this is the case, you will be told about it in the text.

Battles

You will often come across situations in the book where you are instructed to fight a creature of some sort. An option to flee may be given, but if not – or if you choose to fight the creature anyway – you must resolve the battle as set out below.

First, record the creature's SKILL and STAMINA scores on a separate pieces of paper. The scores for each creature are given in the book each time you have an encounter. The sequence of the combat is then:

1. Roll both dice once for the creature. Add its SKILL score. This total is the creature's Attack Strength.
2. Roll both dice once for yourself. Add the number rolled to your SKILL score. This total is your Attack Strength.
3. If your Attack Strength is higher than your opponent, you have wounded it: proceed to step 4. If the creature's Attack Strength is higher than yours, it has wounded you: proceed to step 5. If both Attack Strength totals are the same, you have avoided each other's blows – start the next combat round from step 1, above.
4. You have wounded the creature, so subtract 2 from its STAMINA score. You may use LUCK to inflict additional damage (see below). Now proceed to step 6.
5. The creature has wounded you, so subtract 2 from your own STAMINA score. Again, you may use LUCK at this stage (see below).
6. Make the appropriate adjustments to the STAMINA score of either the creature or yourself (and to your LUCK score if you used luck – see below).
7. You may now perform a heroic stunt in combat (see below).
8. Begin the next attack round by repeating steps 1 to 7.

This sequence continues until the STAMINA score of either the creature you are fighting or yourself has been reduced to 0 (death). If you die, you must start your adventure again from the beginning.

Heroic Stunts

You are a mighty warrior who has learnt many techniques in the art of combat. This means that during a combat round, you may perform one heroic stunt in order to gain an extra advantage. You perform a stunt after Attack Strengths have been calculated and damage has been dealt. If you do, decide which stunt you want to perform and roll one die. If you roll the number needed (see below), you have performed the stunt and you may follow the instructions in the text. If you do not, then the stunt has gone wrong, your opponent gets a strike in and you must lose 2 stamina points (regardless of what damage your opponent normally deals). You are able to perform three stunts. You will be better at one of them depending on your heroic power. They are:

Shield Bash

Works on a roll of 4~6 or 3~6 if you have the *Strength of Telak*.

You may only perform this stunt if you are using your shield in combat. If it works, you strike your opponent with your shield, throwing them off balance. Your opponent loses 2 STAMINA points and must reduce their Attack Strength by 1 for the next combat round.

Flurry of Blows

Works on a roll of 4~6 or 3~6 if you have the *Speed of Pangara*.

If you perform this stunt, you strike all of your opponents with a swift unblockable flurry of blows. Each opponent you are fighting loses 3 STAMINA points.

Exploit Weakness

Works on a roll of 4~6 or 3~6 if you have the *Cunning of Logaan*.

If you perform this stunt, you are able to detect a chink in an opponent's armour or weakness in their guard and get some quick blows in. One opponent loses 1 STAMINA point in this combat round and every combat round for the remainder of the combat. Using this stunt is cumulative. For example, if you manage to do this stunt twice, then you can inflict 2 STAMINA points of damage divided how you choose amongst your opponents.

Escaping

On some pages you may be given the option of running away from battle should things be going badly for you. However, if you do run away, the creature automatically gets in one wound on you (subtract 2 STAMINA points) as you flee. Such is the price of cowardice. Note that you may use LUCK on this wound in the normal way (see below). You may only *Escape* if that option is specifically given to you on the page.

Fighting More than One Opponent

Sometimes you will have to fight more than a single opponent. If you are told to take them on one at a time, proceed by fighting them individually in the order in which they are listed. If you are instructed to fight them all together, at the start of each combat round, you must designate which one you are attacking. Next roll both dice for each of your opponents to determine their individual Attack Strengths. Resolve your personal combat against your chosen adversary in the usual way for that combat round. Then compare your Attack Strength for that round with the Attack Strengths of all your other opponents. Any creature with a higher Attack Strength than yours has scored a hit against you, and you must subtract 2 points from your STAMINA. If you have a higher Attack Strength than an opponent you haven't chosen to attack then you do not wound it.

Luck

At various times during your adventure, either in battles or when you find yourself in a situation in which you could either be lucky or unlucky (details are given on the relevant pages), you may call on your LUCK to make the outcome more favourable. But beware! Using LUCK is a risky business, and if you are unlucky, the results could be disastrous.

The procedure for using LUCK is as follows: roll two dice. If the number rolled is less than or equal to your current LUCK score, then you have been Lucky and the result will go in your favour. If the number rolled is higher than your current LUCK score, then you have been Unlucky and you will be penalized.

The procedure is known as *Testing your Luck*. Each time you *Test your Luck*, after you have tested your luck, subtract 1 from your current LUCK score. Thus you will realise that the more you rely on LUCK, the more risky this will become.

Using Luck in Combat

On certain pages, you will be told to *Test your Luck* and will be informed as to the consequences of being lucky or unlucky. However, in battles, you have the option of using your LUCK, either to inflict a more serious wound on a creature you have just wounded or to minimize the effects of a wound a creature has just inflicted on you. You can only use LUCK on wounds that you have inflicted by winning an attack round or wounds an opponent has inflicted if they have won an attack round. LUCK cannot be used to modify stunt damage.

If you have wounded a creature, you may *Test your Luck* as described above. If you are Lucky, you have inflicted a severe wound and may subtract an extra 2 points from the creature's STAMINA score. However, if you are Unlucky, the wound was a mere graze and you must restore 1 point to the creature's STAMINA score (i.e. instead of scoring the normal 2 points of damage, you have now scored only 1).

If the creature has just wounded you, you may *Test your Luck* to try to minimize the wound. If you are Lucky you have managed to avoid the full damage of the blow. Restore 1 point of STAMINA (i.e. instead of doing 2 points of damage, it has done only 1). If you are Unlucky, you have received a more serious blow. Subtract 1 extra STAMINA point (i.e. instead of doing 2 points of damage, it has done 3). Remember that you must subtract 1 point from your own LUCK score each time you *Test your Luck*.

Testing your Skill

In some situations in the adventure, you may be called upon to *Test your Skill*. The procedure for *Testing your Skill* is similar to *Testing your Luck*. Roll two dice. If the number rolled is equal to or less than your SKILL score then you have succeeded at the *Test of Skill*. If it is higher, you have failed. Unlike *Testing your Luck*, your SKILL score remains the same after *Testing your Skill*. Do not deduct any SKILL points after *Testing your Skill*.

Testing your Stamina

You may also be instructed to *Test your Stamina*. This works similarly to the other test procedures, except you roll three dice to compare against your STAMINA value. As with *Testing your Skill*, a STAMINA test does not cause a loss of STAMINA.

Restoring Skill, Stamina and Luck

Skill

Your SKILL will not change much during your adventure. Occasionally, a paragraph may give you instructions to increase or decrease your SKILL score. Your SKILL score can never exceed its *Initial* value unless otherwise stated in the text.

Stamina

Your STAMINA score will change a lot during your adventure as you battle enemies and undertake arduous tasks. As you near your goal, your STAMINA score may be dangerously low and battles may be particularly risky, so be careful.

Provisions do not restore STAMINA points in this book, but you may find other ways of restoring STAMINA points.

Luck

Additions to your LUCK score are awarded during your adventure after you have been particularly lucky; details are given in the appropriate paragraphs of the book. Remember that as with SKILL and STAMINA, your LUCK score may never exceed its *Initial* value, unless you are specifically instructed otherwise in the paragraph.

Equipment

You will start this adventure with a bare minimum of equipment, but you may acquire other items on your travels. You are armed with a sword and a spear. You carry a shield which you can use not only to block blows, but also offensively, by bashing your opponent. While you carry a shield in combat, you may reduce each opponents' Attack Strength by 1. You also wear a steel helmet. You do not wear body armour as you feel it restricts your movement. You carry a purse containing 50 Gold Pieces. At the beginning of your adventure, you are in command of an army which has many porters and wagons full of other supplies. You have plenty of food and water and access to other equipment, but you do not need to keep track of this equipment.

BACKGROUND

Time: 1997 years since the creation of Titan.
Location: The northern edge of the Desert of Skulls, Allansia.

The air is dry and scorches your throat with every breath you take. The bloodstained sand matches the pink of the sunset over the Desert of Skulls. You stare over the horizon, anxious to see if any more Caarth will assault your men today. Your soldiers stand behind you on the brink of exhaustion, for today has been a hard day of constant combat against strong and cunning opponents with the advantage of knowing the terrain. Your prowess and tactical knowledge brought you victory, but at a great cost. Each Caarth warrior is strong and quick and bears poisonous fangs. Despite being outnumbered, each snake man slew at least two of your fine, highly trained soldiers. Your army of a thousand now numbers three hundred.

There is no sign of another assault, so you give the signal to return to Karnak Tor. With exhausted relief, your soldiers obey.

You remember visiting the frontier town of Karnak Tor in your youth. Despite being near the Desert of Skulls, its surrounding countryside was verdant grassland, suitable for many crops and grazing animals. Since then, however, the soil has grown dryer and dustier and many harvests of crops have failed. It is as if the desert itself is marching northwards and invading your lands. The townsfolk have been suffering from Caarth raids and attacks from other unnatural desert beasts over the years and have so become battle-hardened and grim. However, four months ago, a messenger arrived in Carsepolis begging for aid as the Caarth were attacking them on a daily basis. As well as sending warriors, their sorcerers summoned sandstorms that buffeted the town and choked the animals. This is why you and your legion were sent.

When you arrive in the town, there is no welcome to herald your victory. The townspeople have grown too used to conflict to care about the result of one of the many battles they have had to deal with. Your men need no prompt to rest. They place their weapons and armour near their beds, eat their rations in silence and collapse in their bunks, exhausted.

You, however, are always mindful of forming a new strategy. You climb the tallest tower on the town wall and look across the desert with your spyglass, taking advantage of the last light of the sun. That is when you see the shapes.

The Caarth don't need tents. They sleep under the sand dunes, but you have learnt to spot the S shapes in the sand to stop them ambushing you. You see a lot of those shapes now. They are about an hour's march away. You thank your lucky stars that you have a few hours rest from the assault. The Caarth, being cold blooded, do not travel or fight at night, for the coldness of the desert makes them slow and dozy. You have eight hours before dawn; enough time to rest your men and then ambush this raiding party. It is a big force, but you have proved to the people of Allansia that you can overcome great odds.

They now say that you were blessed by the gods, but you scoff at such claims. Your victories are all your own. You have become powerful through suffering excruciating pains only to come out stronger. You have shirked no challenge and shrunk from no exertion. Only this way have you risen to such legendary heights.

You descend the tower and head to your own quarters in order to get a few hours sleep yourself before your onslaught begins anew. Once you have checked your weapons and armour, you slip Into your bed and fall asleep instantly. However, the gods do not want you to rest tonight as they plague your slumber with all kinds of strange dreams…

Turn to paragraph **1**.

1

You dream that you are in a rocky valley, somewhere near your home. A figure approaches you, hovering above the ground. As it gets closer you realise that it is your father, his face sallow and gaunt. He says nothing, but watches you intently. Then comes the thud and the sharp pain in your arm. You look at it to see an arrow protruding from your shoulder. Fire courses through your veins. The agony is unbearable.

You awake. You are in your quarters, lying on your bed. It is dark. You gather your equipment, leave your room and stride out into the courtyard of the castle that you are staying in.

'Dilios!' you shout to an armed guard standing near a water clock. 'What hour is it?'

'Two hours to the dawn, my liege,' replies Dilios.

'Then gather the men. We march in thirty minutes.'

After a frenzy of activity, your squad of three hundred handpicked elite soldiers is standing to attention before you, prepared to face the Caarth horde that awaits them. You march out silently across the desert, always keeping a watchful eye out for strange patterns in the sand. When you approach where the Caarth are sleeping, you stop the men. You have the upper hand - the Caarth will still be sluggish, but how will you take advantage of their vulnerability?

If you choose to assault the Caarth now, turn to **168**. If you choose to manoeuvre your men to get into a more advantageous position, turn to **63**.

2

You dash away from the horde, turn around and run back. In a blur, you run past the zombies, decapitating one with your sword as you sprint past. The hunchback stares on in terror and confusion; all he saw was a blur followed by a collapsing headless zombie. The zombies, confused, march around not knowing where you are. You repeat your swift approach and decapitate another zombie. Eventually, all that is left of the horde is a pile of headless corpses. The hunchback flees into the cave. If you want to pursue him and eradicate his evil from Titan, turn to **126**. If you want to quit this place, turn to **176**.

3

You search the docks, looking for a captain that will give you passage. However, none will do so for any amount of money. Eventually, you come across a merchant who offers you passage if you dispose of a particularly vicious pirate captain who has been terrorising the coast. 'I have lost two shipments to him in the last six months,' complains the captain. He tells you that the pirate captain is in one of the taverns in the docks and gives you a description of him. You enter the taverns and seek out the pirate captain, a tall, muscular grotesque man. You approach him and challenge him to single combat. He grins with black teeth, draws a cutlass and launches a merciless assault on you.

PIRATE CAPTAIN   SKILL 11   STAMINA 10

If you win, turn to **100**.

4

You stumble on a root and Atalanta speeds ahead of you. The finish line is not far away, but you won't be able to beat Atalanta unless you have a golden apple to distract her. If you do, turn to **102**. If you do not, turn to **145**.

5

The temple of Telak is a simple stone building in the centre of the city. The temple has few worshippers in it, but you see several priests wearing gold engraved armour and carrying maces. The high priest approaches you. 'Welcome to our temple, my lord. How may we be of service?' If you have the codeword *Heracles* on your *Adventure Sheet*, turn to **158**. If you do not, the priest can offer you two blessings. First, he can bless your spear so that it will seek the heart of anyone who has bathed it in blood. It will cost you 100 Gold Pieces. If you buy this blessing, deduct 100 Gold Pieces from your money and add the codeword *heartseeker* to your *Adventure Sheet*. The priest will also bless you with

strength of arms in battle for 50 Gold Pieces. If you take this blessing, deduct 50 Gold Pieces from your *Adventure Sheet*. You may increase your Attack Strength by 1 in your next combat. When you have finished, you leave. Turn to **177**.

6

The temple of Vuh has seen better days. A headless, armless statue to Vuh stands before what was once a spotless white marble building. You enter through the wooden doors to find a hall devoid of worshippers. It's only occupant an old priest in white robes approaches you. 'Welcome to the temple of Vuh, the life of the world. How may I help?' If you have a golden chalice, turn to **143**. If you say that you wish to join the church of Vuh (you may not do this if you have the codeword *Ashra* on your *Adventure Sheet*), turn to **95**. Otherwise, you leave; turn to **177**.

7

With your last blow, you plunge your sword into the Old One's body. Instead of collapsing, its form pops with a hissing sound and thin pieces of membrane fly all over the cavern. A golden light floods the cavern and a woman in a golden robe stands before you. If you have the *Achilles' Heel* flaw, turn to **30**. If you do not, turn to **151**.

8

'This pebble is carried by our rangers. It confers skill in battle and in hunting to them.' From now on whenever you use a stunt in combat, you may add 1 to the number rolled to see if you succeed. Also, as long as you own this stone you may spend 3 LUCK points at the beginning of a combat in order to increase your attack strength by 1 for that combat. Turn to **48**.

9

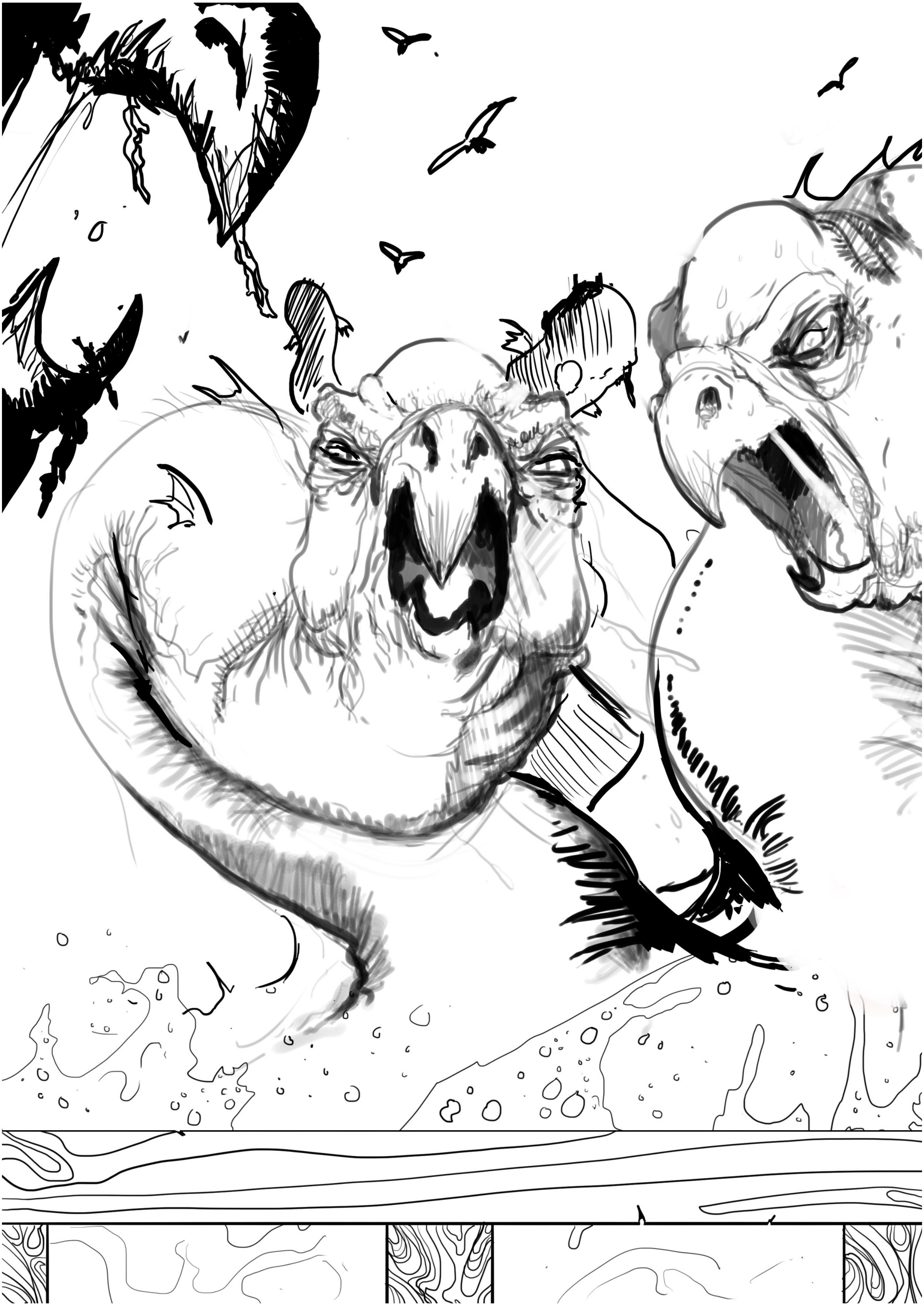
You drop your torch and spear, draw your sword and shield and charge into the zombie horde with a battle cry. The hunchback orders his zombies to destroy you. You hack and stab at the animated corpses, desperately trying to immobilise them and destroy them while they punch, slam and gouge you with their arms and legs. You are outnumbered and cannot fend off every blow from so many opponents but you fight on anyway. Fight the zombie horde as a single creature. As long as the zombie horde's STAMINA is 10 or more, you must lose 1 STAMINA point at the end of every combat round as you cannot block all of their blows.

ZOMBIE HORDE SKILL 9 STAMINA 25

You cannot *Escape* as you are too enraged. If you win, turn to **173**.

10

Upon seeing you, the priest's jovial face turns serious. 'I see you have undergone great trials, my lord, and I am glad that the cunning of the tricksters helped you. However, I still see that the balance has swung in the favour of chaos, and for this we must help you in order to restore the balance.' The priest takes you to a room containing an Elvin hovering over a pool of water glowing with many colours. The priest whispers to the Elvin who dives into the water. After a few minutes, the Elvin surfaces and whispers to the priest. 'There is



a powerful and evil artefact of the Old Gods buried and forgotten in the Wizards' Guild Archives. Those who upset the balance are searching for it. Find it first to save us.' Add the codeword *archive* to your *Adventure Sheet*. The priest gives you the blessing of the tricksters. Restore your LUCK to its *Initial* level. You go on your way. Turn to **177**.

11

Berem strikes you and the crowd goes wild, cheering and congratulating him. You leave them to it in shame (lose 2 LUCK points). Turn to **177**.

12

You order your men to weigh anchor, set a course for Fire Island and take this opportunity to rest. Soon, your trireme is out in the open sea and you can spy the smoke of Fire Island's volcano in the distance. As the hours go by, the island gets bigger. Looking at it through a telescope, you can see figures on the beach moving around, though doing what, you cannot tell. You are about an hour from Fire Island when the boat starts to rock. You look at the skipper, who is puzzled as to where the waves are coming from on such a calm, clear day. Then you see five giant snake-like heads emerge from the water to tower above you. They stare down at the trireme in rage, poised to strike at your fragile vessel. The sailors are rooted to the spot in terror. You are facing a giant HYDRA! If you have the word *gust* on your *Adventure Sheet*, turn to **57**. If you have an enchanted spear and wish to throw it at the hydra, turn to **74**. Otherwise, turn to **147**.

13

Without hesitation, you thrust your sword into the whining brat's neck. His pleas and threats are replaced with a gurgling sound as blood fills his windpipe. When he is lying on the floor in a pool of his own blood, you realise that he is sleeping in your father's old room. What is worse, the bag that he was packing included some of your father's possessions. Then you notice a letter amongst them with your father's personal seal. You take the letter and read it.

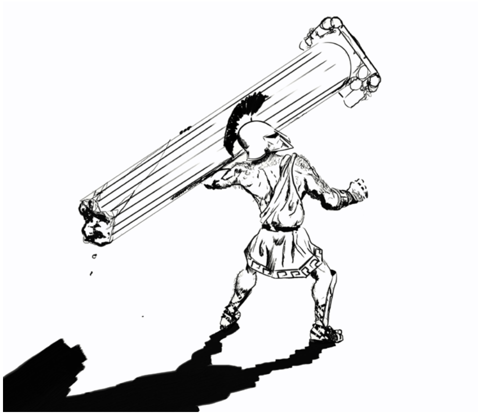
My child,

As I write this, I do not have long. I have discovered a terrible secret that may ravage the city and indeed all of Titan. For years now, the cults of the Old Gods, Ashra, bringer of light, and Vuh, bringer of life, have been dwindling. The worship of Elim the bringer of darkness has always been outlawed in this city, but it seems that there is a powerful cult of Elim in the city which has been the quiet power behind the throne for many years now. Doing what, I have yet to find out, but it cannot be good for any of us. If I should be killed by the Elimites, then you must carry on this cause for me and save Carsepolis from this evil. There is one clue that I can give you. I caught an Elimite who was going to try to break into the Wizards' Guild archives in search of some lost object, but he had no idea what it was. There is something in there that they want. Find out what it is and either destroy it or make sure that it is beyond their grasp.

Agamemnon

Your father's letter shakes you to the core. You may have to ask around the city about this. Whenever you read a paragraph that starts with 'You approach the large doors of the…', you may add 10 to the paragraph and turn to the new paragraph to ask someone about the letter. Add the codeword *archive* to your *Adventure Sheet*. You also notice your father's ring, bearing the insignia of your house. You may also take this. Add your father's ring to your *Adventure Sheet*.

Now that the courtiers have been dealt with, you return to your mother. Turn to **174**.



14

You gulp down the sedative and the rage subsides. Remember that you must subtract 1 from your Attack Strength in your next combat. Then your senses warn you of something. You whirl round to see a woman dressed in black advancing upon you with a dagger. The Elimite was trying to distract you so this assassin could kill you. You face the assassin in a fair fight. If you have the *Achilles' Heel* flaw and the assassin rolls an 11 or 12 for her Attack Strength and wins the combat round, then she plunges her dagger into your neck, killing you instantly.

ASSASSIN SKILL 10 STAMINA 12

If you win, turn to **160**.

15

You approach the large doors of the palace and request to see the king on a matter of the utmost urgency. The guards let you in with a salute but they leave you waiting in the antechamber. You are getting very irritated by the time a priest in white robes appears. He introduces himself as high priest Ikunum. You have never heard of this man before and you thought you knew everybody 'I am sorry that the king cannot see you my lord, but is there anything I can help with?' You tell him that you have a message of utmost importance and that it is for the king's ears only. 'Then you will have to return another time for the king is indisposed with the affairs of state.' Ikunum asks the guards to escort you from the palace. Six heavily armed guards approach you. You do not want to fight the king's men so you leave. If you wish to hang around the palace and see who this Ikunum is and what he is up to, turn to **191**. If you return to the city and try another place, turn to **177**.

16

Despite being outnumbered, your men hold their own against the Caarth warriors who seem to be faltering under your soldiers' relentless assault. Then you spot something. A robed Caarth is standing some distance away. It is waving a crystal tipped staff around. As it does, a glow forms around the crystal and gradually gets brighter. However, nearby, another group of Caarth have risen up from the sand, and your men seem hard pressed to defend themselves against such numbers.

If you want to attack the robed Caarth wielding the staff, turn to **218**. If you want to help your men against the Caarth warriors, turn to **206**.

17

You show the men a jolly good time and ask them if they want to crew your trireme. Many of them do. The cost of hiring them is 150 Gold Pieces. If you decide to pay this, add the codeword *crew* to your *Adventure Sheet* and leave the tavern (turn to **177**). If you do not want to pay them this amount, you may either talk to your friend, the trader captain, if you have not done so already (turn to **64**), or leave (turn to **177**).

18

At this range, you cannot miss. Your spear strikes the hunchback's head, which explodes in a shower of hissing yellow liquid. The zombies still advance upon you, however, and you are surrounded. They grab, punch and gouge you with their arms. Lose 4 STAMINA points. You drop your torch and draw your sword and shield to defend yourself. You must cut these corpses to pieces to stop their inexorable attacks. You are outnumbered and cannot fend off every blow from so many opponents, but you fight on anyway. Fight the zombie horde as a single creature. As long as the zombie horde's STAMINA is 10 or more, you must lose 1 STAMINA point at the end of every combat round as you cannot block all of their blows.

ZOMBIE HORDE SKILL 9 STAMINA 25

You may escape once the horde's STAMINA is reduced to 15 or less. If you do so, turn to **176**. If you win, the last zombie collapses into pieces. If you wish to explore the hunchback's cave, turn to **195**. If you wish to quit this place, turn to **148**.

19

You drink the small amount of liquid from the vial and immediately feel very strange. You have drunk a potion of the fates, and its effects may be beneficial or baneful, but they are always completely unpredictable. Roll 1 die to determine what effect it has upon you..

ROLL	EFFECT
1	Cursed! You must reduce your current and *Initial* LUCK by 1.
2~3	Fortune's fool - you automatically fail your next non-combat *Test for Luck* and deduct a LUCK point when you do so.
4~5	Favoured of fortune - you automatically pass your next *Test for Luck*, and you do not need to deduct a LUCK point.
6	Blessed! Increase your *Initial* LUCK by 1 and restore your LUCK to that value.

Once you have rolled, turn to **195**.

20

Your blows fell the courtiers easily. Some flee upon seeing your skill, but you chase them down and finish them off. Such is the penalty for being so disrespectful towards your house and your mother. You chase one man to his room and burst through the door. He is curled up on the floor. 'Mercy!' He shouts. When he sees the look on your face, he tries another tactic 'I am the Crown Prince of Salamonis! Kill me and you may bring war upon Carsepolis. We might be too weak to fight you now, but think of how my murder will sound amongst the city-states. Spare me and I won't hold it against you.' If you have the *Rage* flaw, turn to **13**. Otherwise, you may spare him (turn to **120**), or damn the consequences and execute him for his impertinence (turn to **13**).

21

'These gloves will guide your hands in combat and ensure that your foes will feel the sting of the thorns. Once per combat, you may either automatically win one combat round or automatically succeed at one heroic stunt. Turn to **48**.

22

You hurl your spear at the sorcerer's head, dealing what should be a fatal blow. However, the spear stops inches away from the sorcerer's head and shatters into a million pieces, leaving the sorcerer unharmed. Delete the spear from your equipment list. You curse as you realise that the sorcerer has magical protection. However, you don't have time to attack the sorcerer, as the warrior is upon you! Green blood seeps from a gash on its face, but it does not stop its relentless assault.

CAARTH WARRIOR SKILL 10 STAMINA 7

If you defeat the warrior in four attack rounds or fewer (remember that you can use heroic stunts), turn to **184**. After the end of the fourth attack round, if you are still fighting the warrior, turn to **77**.

23

How will you get the apples? If you try to climb the tree, turn to **36**. If you try to shake the tree, turn to **49**. If you try to knock them out of the tree, turn to **178**.

24

You carry on along the path until you hear chanting behind you. A wizard in the blue robes of the Carsepolis Wizards' Guild is chanting. He points his finger at you, unleashing a blast of lightning. If you have the Shroud of Vuh, turn to **163**. Otherwise, you have no time to dodge the bolt as it strikes you and sends you flying. Lose 2d6 + 2 STAMINA points. If you are still alive, the wizard then holds up a wand and a buzzing red shaft of light emerges from it. The wizard wields it like a sword. You must fight the Elimite wizard Erishum. If you have the Staff of Ashra, it glows with a white light. If you fight him with the Staff of Ashra you will kill him as soon as you win an attack round (stunt damage remains the same).

WIZARD ERISHUM (with wand-sword) SKILL 12 STAMINA 10

If you win, turn to **107**.

25

The guard lets you into the palace with a salute. Upon seeing your father's personal seal, he immediately runs to tell the king in person. A few minutes later, the king arrives to the antechamber. He reads the letter. 'My condolences for your loss, young one. He was a great warrior and a skilled diplomat. I could not have asked for a better advisor. It seems that he was helping me to his last breath. As you have taken it upon yourself to complete his work, what is mine is yours. I can offer you my men to help you with anything you may wish to do.' Add the codeword *crew* to your *Adventure Sheet*. 'Between you and me, I have been suspicious of insidious goings on for some time. Powerful priests have sprung up from nowhere and have integrated themselves amongst the rich and powerful. There is one in this palace who I am suspicious of, but I have found nothing out yet. I keep him close so that I can keep an eye on him. I have sent spies to investigate him but they have been murdered. If you can find out anything, please tell me. Now you must go for I have the affairs of state to attend to.' You thank the king, bow and return to the city. Turn to **177**.

26

The lightning lights up the sky, but then you see a different light across the sea. The glow dances across the surface of the ocean before settling on the sandy beach from whence you came. If you wish to return to the beach to see what it is, turn to **52**. If you wish to continue your journey, turn to **156**.

27

You ask the apprentice to show you to the archives. He takes you down several winding stairs into a huge cavernous room with shelves stretching for as far as you can see. Upon the shelves are scrolls, books and artefacts of all descriptions. You are looking for a needle in a haystack. *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, turn to **182**. If you are Unlucky, turn to **203**.

28

You take a sip of the liquid. It tastes like wine. You also notice that your spear wound from the hunchback is closing up. You drink a little more and it disappears completely. You have found a fine wine infused with healing herbs. Restore 4 STAMINA points. You may add this wine to your equipment list. There is one more use and it will restore 4 STAMINA points. Turn to **195**.

29

However, you never get the chance to climb in as you feel the agonizing pain of something being thrust into your back. You whirl round to see the masked face of your assassin as she plunges her dagger into your chest. It is the last thing you see.

30

Without a word, the woman holds forth her hand, offering you a golden chalice. She motions to one of the glowing pools around the cavern. You dip the chalice into a pool and drink the water. Immediately, you feel better. You look at your wounds to see them healing up and feel your pain subsiding. You feel stronger than you ever have felt. Increase your *Initial* STAMINA by 2 and restore your STAMINA to that level. You are now immune to poisons. For the rest of this gamebook, if you are told to lose STAMINA through poison, you may ignore this instruction. Also, if you ever read the sentence 'The poison courses through your veins,' add 10 to the paragraph that you are on and turn to that new paragraph.

Once you have drunk the water, you notice that the glow has vanished but the golden chalice remains. Add the golden chalice to your equipment list. Turn to **54**.

31

You buy a round of strong ale for the men who all become very jolly and start singing sea shanties. Then you buy a round of mead and everyone gets very drunk indeed. If you have the *Rage* flaw, turn to **153**. If you have the *Hubris* flaw, turn to **123**. If you have the *Achilles' Heel* flaw, turn to **17**.

32

The priest looks into your eyes. 'I see that you are a true child of Pangara. Come with me.' You follow him to the high priest who immediately senses your talent. 'I see that you have been tasked with something of great difficulty. Let us consult the oracle to see if she has heard anything on the winds.'

The priest takes you into a chamber where a young woman in a white robe sits on a throne. A sweet smelling gas seeps up from a crack in the floor near the throne. The priest approaches the woman and whispers in her ear. The girl closes her eyes and mumbles something. She stops and cocks her head as if listening to someone. As she does, her breathing gets heavier and she starts to shake. Then with a gasp, she stops and collapses into her chair, still and limp. You are worried, but the priest nods to you, telling you that it is okay. Then the woman's eyes flick open and she walks across the room to you. When she speaks, her voice is deep and powerful, not what you would expect from such a fragile-looking girl.

'The Old enemies are arising and they are searching for an artefact in the city. It has been forgotten about and kept for a long time in the Guild of Wizards.' The woman then stares at you in bewilderment as if she has not seen you before.

'Heed the words of the oracle, my friend. I

hope that they help. Take the blessing of the god of winds. Good luck in your journey, for it seems that the fates of many lie with you.' Add the codewords *archive* and *gust* to your *Adventure Sheet*. Turn to **177**.

33

You swim for an hour before getting to the beach on Fire Island, where you collapse, exhausted. Eventually, you get up to explore the area, ever watchful of giant crabs. You hear shouts from the distance. You follow the sound and round a corner to see lizard men ordering human slaves to move large pieces of marble inland. This must be where they are building the temple of Elim. Confident that none of the slaves or lizard man slavers pose a real threat, you draw your weapons and stride down onto the beach, prepared for combat. The lizard men look at you nervously and about ten of them eventually work up the courage to approach you armed with whips and curved swords. Fight the lizard men as a single opponent. As long as they have 10 or more STAMINA, lose 1 STAMINA point at the end of every combat round as you cannot fend off all of their blows. If you are using an enchanted spear, you may deal an extra 2 damage to the lizard men (stunt damage remains the same).

LIZARD MEN
SLAVERS SKILL 10 STAMINA 18

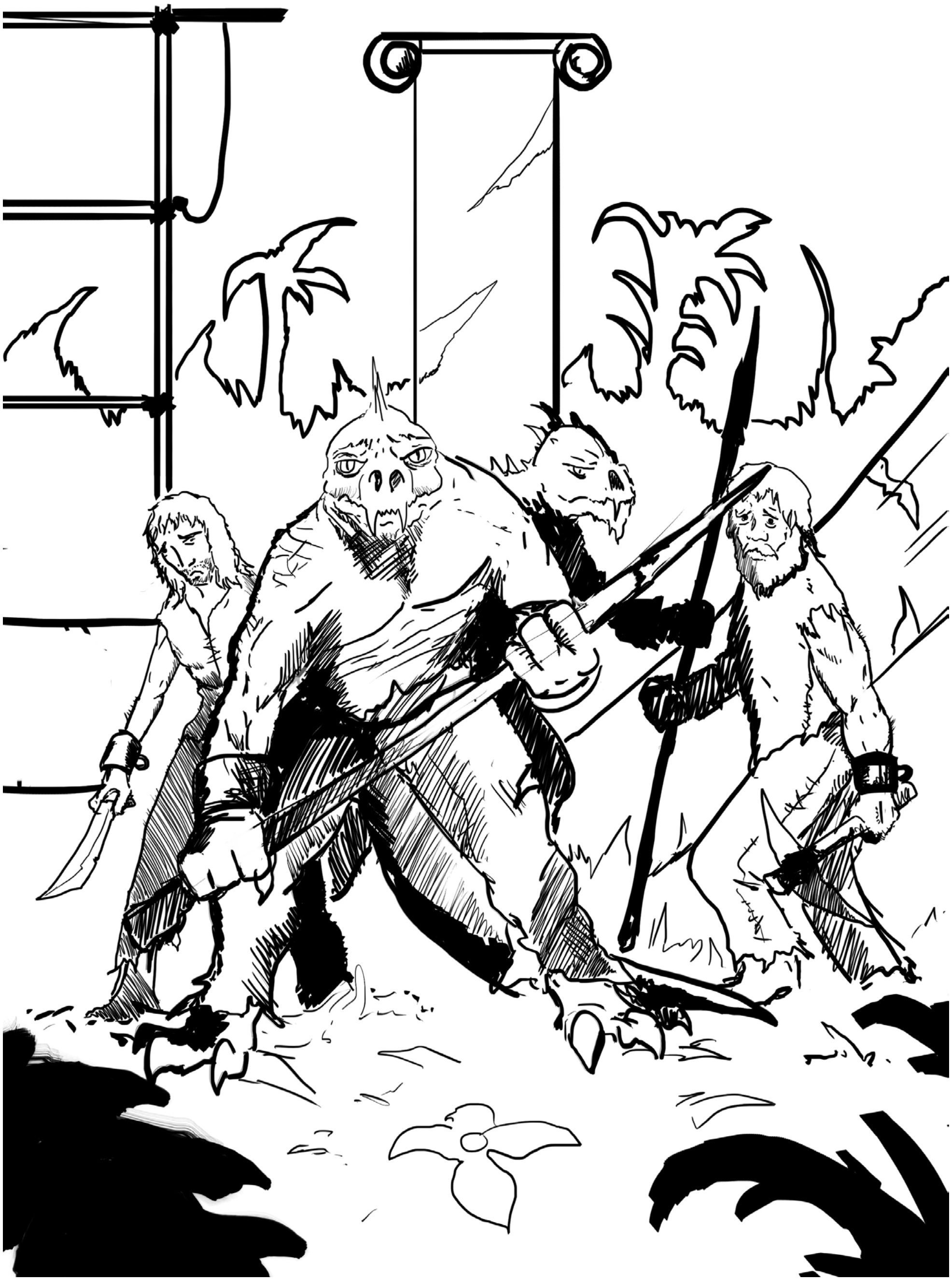
If you win, turn to **42**.

34

The champion goes down, bleeding from many wounds. Now the path to the temple is clear. You prepare yourself for the final confrontation. Turn to **164**.

35

'So you can survive my spears, but I'm still going to stick you like the pig you are.' shouts the man. If you have the *Rage* flaw, turn to **71**. If you do not, turn to **82**.



36

Climbing the tree is going to be difficult as it is tall and has few low branches. *Test your Skill*, adding 4 to the number rolled unless you have the *Speed of Pangara*. If you fail, you fall out of the tree half way up. Lose 3 STAMINA points. Turn to **141**.

If you succeed, you manage to get to the top where you find several apples all of different colours. You are able to pick three before you feel the branch below you start to crack. You climb down and inspect your prizes. You have found a silver apple of healing (You may eat the silver apple at any time apart from combat. It will restore your STAMINA to its *Initial* level), a bronze apple of prowess (You may eat the bronze apple at any time you are asked if you have the *Strength of Telak* or the *Speed of Pangara* heroic power and continue for that one option as if you have them) and a golden apple of the gods (you may eat this apple to increase your *Initial* LUCK score by 1 and then restore your LUCK score to its new *Initial* level).

You may only use each apple once. Happy with your haul, you move on. Turn to **141**.

37

You run from the Treeman as fast as you can. Lose 3 LUCK points for your cowardice and foolishness, as the Treeman may not have been hostile. You continue through the forest. Turn to **101**.

38

You head to the storeroom for supplies. If you do not have a spear add one to your equipment list. You also fill a backpack with enough food for your journey, five torches, a flint and tinder and a water skin (add these to your equipment list). Finally, you see Chiron, the healer, who tends to your wounds as best as he can in the short time you have (restore your STAMINA to its *Initial* level). Eager to avenge your father and protect Carsepolis from this hidden danger, you set out immediately. You walk for hours along the grassland before the climate becomes more temperate and the vegetation becomes denser. You stop to rest and eat for a short time. While you are chewing on your dried meat, you think about the route you could take to Carsepolis. You could take the short but precarious trail through the mountains where people are said to learn peace, you could hack your way through the dense forest where it is said that the forces of nature bring humility to all people, or you could follow the coast to your city along the sea which, according to legend will make invulnerable anyone who can survive in it for one hundred days. To take the mountain route, turn to **213**. To go through the forest, turn to **138**. To travel along the coast, turn to **192**.

39

This luck charm will allow you to deduct 1 from all rolls when you *Test your Luck*. Turn to **121**.

40

Just as he is upon you, you show your father his ring. He stops. Something has been evoked from his memory. He cannot break the spell, but his inner struggle makes him collapse to the floor, unconscious. The priest curses as you run past your father. Turn to **51**.

41

As the spear flies through the air, another arrow hits you. The spear strikes the archer, but he continues to fire arrows at you relentlessly. You try to run to the boat to fight him, but you are peppered with arrows and you cannot make it. Eventually, with a dozen arrows sticking out from your body, you collapse at the docks, never to get up again.

42

You slay the last of the lizard men and tell the slaves to take their weapons and fight for their freedom. They do so. They tell you that the temple is inland and that all you have to do is follow the path. You follow the path for an hour without an encounter until you come to a small hut in the jungle. If you investigate it, turn to **169**. If you move on, turn to **24**.

43

'It is good that you wish to become an acolyte of the god of light for few wish to follow the old gods nowadays. However, those who wish to become acolytes must still pass dangerous and gruelling tests.' If you still wish to become an acolyte, turn to **122**. If not, you leave the temple and return to the city centre. Turn to **177**.

44

Silently, you signal your men to take up their positions. A dozen soldiers take up bows and run some distance away from the Caarth while the rest of your men ready their spears to stab at the sand. When they are ready, poised for your order, you scream your battle cry. As one, your soldiers plunge their spears into the sand. The silence of the desert is broken by the agonised hisses of Caarth and the gleeful bloodthirsty war cries of men. The battle is far from over, however, as more Caarth burst out from the sand, wielding wicked curved swords. However, volley after volley of arrows from your archers cuts down the second wave. The Caarth seem to be without number, however, and a third wave of Caarth burst up from the sand. A leather clad Caarth warrior stands before you, its cold eyes betraying no emotion as it closes in for the kill.

CAARTH
WARRIOR SKILL 10 STAMINA 10

If you win, turn to **16**.

45

It has all been too much. The exertion from the blast of lightning, travelling and combat has taken its toll. You collapse on the cliff top, exhausted, and yield to death's irresistible, sweet call to rest. You close your eyes and never open them again.

46

Your last blow causes the thing to scream. Then its assault stops. The priest opens up the flagstone to reveal an empty room. Where has the thing gone? You climb the stairs and follow the priest back to the temple where he picks up a masterfully made staff with a large crystal on top of it. Turn to **117**.

47

The priest screams as you land your final blow upon him. He then crumbles away as if he is made of dust. Soon, there is nothing left but the glowing black dagger. If you want to take it, turn to **207**. If you want to leave it, you quit this evil place. If you have the codeword *slayer* on your *Adventure Sheet*, turn to **167**. If you do not, turn to **152**.

48

Against all odds you pass the finish line before the fleet footed druidess. The crowd is flabbergasted, but the druid declares you the winner. Later that day, you are initiated as part of the tribe of the woodland with a feast and dancing. You are taken away from the merriment by the old druid to be given gifts upon becoming part of the tribe. You may pick any three of the following items. When you have picked your three items, turn to **128**.

A wooden ring?	Turn to **93**.
A copper ring?	Turn to **108**.
Leather gloves covered in thorns?	Turn to **21**.
An obsidian bat amulet?	Turn to **204**.
A polished pebble?	Turn to **8**.
A bracelet of green metal?	Turn to **146**.
A wooden sword?	Turn to **60**.

49

Shaking such a sturdy tree to get the apples is no mean feat. *Test your Stamina*, adding 5 to the number rolled if you do not have the *Strength of Telak*. If you fail, you do not get any apples. Turn to **141**.

If you succeed, you manage to shake three apples out of the tree. You inspect your prizes. You have found a silver apple of healing (You may eat the silver apple at any time apart from combat. It will restore your STAMINA to its *Initial* level), a bronze apple of prowess (You may eat the bronze apple at any time you are asked if you have the *Strength of Telak* or the *Speed of Pangara* heroic power and continue for that one option as if you have them) and a golden apple of the gods (you may eat this apple to increase

your *Initial* LUCK score by 1 and then restore your LUCK score to its *Initial* level).

You may only use each apple once. Happy with your haul, you move on. Turn to **141**.

50

The wind whistles past you as you fall, then the water's surface strikes you like a troll's club. You are immersed in the soundless realm of Hydana. The water is dark, but you see a glow approach you. As it gets closer, you see the figure of a beautiful MERMAID accompanied by several glowfish. The mermaid takes your hand and swims with you through the ocean. At first you panic, as you need air, but when you take in a gulp of water it feels as if you are breathing. There is some powerful magic at work here. Eventually, you come to a cave entrance in a cliff face where the mermaid lets go of your hand and points to the entrance. She smiles and waves before swimming off. You guess that something of help may be inside this cave. Turn to **110**.

51

You charge at Ikunum, the priest, but he points the dagger at you and black fire flies towards you. If you do not have the Shroud of Vuh, the black fire burns your skin and sears your flesh. Lose 6 STAMINA points. If you have the shroud of Vuh, the fire envelops you but you feel nothing from it. It then flies back at the evil high priest and engulfs him! Subtract 6 from Ikunum's STAMINA. Desperately, you advance upon the priest, ready to destroy him and avenge your family. He wields the dagger of Elim, a powerful artefact of the dark god.

If you have the codewords *Ashra* or *Vuh* then if the priest wins one attack round you are killed, destroyed by the magic of the dagger. This effect does not apply to stunt-related damage.

If you have the Staff of Ashra, then if you win one attack round, you kill Ikunum – he is destroyed by the light of Ashra. You cannot instantly kill Ikunum with damage caused by stunts.

If you have the Shroud of Vuh, you may reduce Ikunum's Attack Strength by 1.

IKUNUM SKILL 11 STAMINA 15

If you win, turn to **47**.

52

You head back down to the beach. As your foot touches the sand, the glow flies towards you until it is almost upon you. Then you see what it is – a beautiful woman in golden robes hovers above the ground, bathed in the light of the glow. She looks at you and smiles. Then she flies past you and enters a previously unnoticed cave at the foot of the cliff that you just climbed. If you wish to follow her, turn to **110**. If you are anxious to return to Carsepolis, you climb the cliff again and continue your journey. Turn to **156**.

53

You last blow reduces the elemental to rubble. You have just enough time to see a blue robed wizard holding the dagger before he disappears into thin air. Dozens of wizards run to where you are, including Platonus, the guildmaster. You explain to him what happened and what was stolen. It transpires that the dagger's thief was Erishum, a powerful wizard who had recently worked his way up the ranks of the guild. 'I never trusted him,' says Platonus. 'We must discover exactly what he has stolen and what the consequences might be.' Turn to **201**.

54

Just as you are about to leave, you notice that the pools are beginning to glow. You inspect them to see that each pool contains an item. A woman's voice in your head tells you that you make take two of the following items. For each item that you choose to take, turn to its appropriate paragraph. When you have taken your two items, turn to **155**.

A sword with a ruby for a hilt?	Turn to **136**.
A masterfully made steel helmet?	Turn to **88**.
A silver ring with a large diamond in it?	Turn to **162**.
A well-made pair of winged sandals?	Turn to **75**.
A golden armband studded with green gems?	Turn to **161**.
A golden statuette?	Turn to **208**.
A lead statuette?	Turn to **179**.

55

You run at the huge Caarth, who bares its teeth in joy at the thought of crushing you. When you get within striking distance, the Caarth lashes out at you with its foot. You are too close to dodge it and you must block it with your shield. If you have the *Strength of Telak*, turn to **61**. If not, turn to **210**.

56

You boast that you will beat any challenge that the druids could give you. The old druid merely smiles and tells you to follow him. Turn to **193**.

57

Out of the blue comes a gust of wind which blows your trireme just out of the hydra's reach. However, it starts to pursue your boat. 'Abandon ship!' you order as one of the hydra's heads descends onto the bow of the ship, smashing it into two pieces and sending you all flying. You hit the water with a crash and desperately start to swim for Fire Island while the hydra annihilates your boat. At least it has turned its attention away from you. Turn to **33**.

58

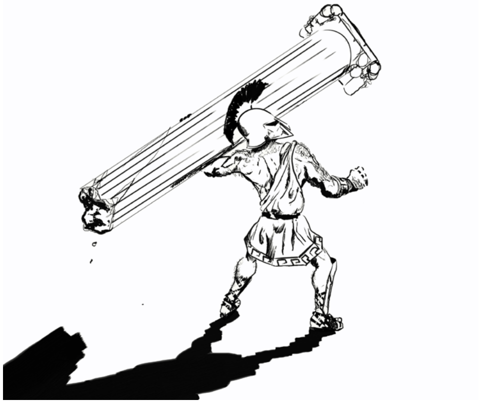
Stunned by the death of their champion, the Caarth warriors fall back, hissing in dismay and anger. Your men jeer and whoop in delight as the Caarth retreat back to the desert. You are glad that they did, for your men are close to exhaustion. Still, the ambush was a success. Hundreds of Caarth corpses litter the desert while you lost only a dozen men. You give your men a rousing speech and order that they return to Karnak Tor for a feast. Turn to **219**.

59

The taverns are full of sailors and adventurers enjoying a quiet drink between journeys and battles. This will be an excellent place to pick up crewmembers for your trireme if you wish. If you do not want to, you may return to the city, turn to **177**. If you do want to recruit crewmembers, you could buy a round of drinks for the tavern (which will cost you 50 Gold Pieces). If you do, turn to **31**. Or will you approach someone who you know to be a captain of a trading ship (turn to **64**)?

60

Despite being made of wood, the sword is as hard as steel. This sword is enchanted and will increase your Attack Strength by 1. Also, if you successfully *Test your Luck* in combat in order to deal more damage, you may deal an extra 4 points of damage instead of an extra 2 points of damage. Turn to **48**.



61

The foot strikes your shield and you use your strength to push back. There is a loud crack as your great strength shoves the leg bone into the Caarth champion's hip. It screams in agony as it collapses to the ground. You swiftly silence its screams with a blow to its neck. Note the codeword *Heracles* on your *Adventure Sheet* and turn to **58**.

62

As you drink the liquid, you feel strength and power course through your veins. You feel your arms and legs grow quickly and painfully. Lose 3 STAMINA points and increase your Attack Strength in your next combat by 1. You have drunk a potion of growth and power. There are 3 doses left. At the beginning of a combat, you may drink the potion. This will increase your Attack Strength by 1 for the combat and also reduce your STAMINA by 3. Turn to **195**.

63

Silently, you signal your men to take up positions ready for an ambush. If you have the *Cunning of Logaan*, turn to **67**. If you do not, turn to **44**.

64

You approach Thalos, a spice trader who plies his trade between Carsepolis and the south. You swap tales about the desert and the southern jungles before you get down to business and you ask to hire him and his crew. 'I do not have any spices to trade at the moment, so I could do that. I will offer you myself and my crew for 500 Gold Pieces.' You haggle him down to the price of 400 Gold Pieces or a magical ring, bracelet or amulet or a golden chalice or one magical weapon (you may get a replacement non-magical sword or spear if you give him a magical weapon). If you wish to pay this price, add the codeword *crew* to your *Adventure Sheet*. Otherwise, you could buy a round of drinks for 50 Gold Pieces (turn to **31**), or leave the tavern (turn to **177**).

65

If you take this warhammer, you must replace your sword with it (if you do not want to do this, you may get a refund). The warhammer is enchanted and can be used to crush rocks with ease. Turn to **121**.

66

You throw your spear at the champion, who catches it and drops it on the sand. Cross the spear from your equipment list. The champion looks at you with disgust.

If you accept the challenge, turn to **106**. If you take advantage of the distraction and order your men to rush the Caarth, turn to **87**.

67

Your men lay nets over the sand where the Caarth are sleeping. You then signal your soldiers to raise their spears. Then, when they are ready, poised for your order, you scream your battle cry. As one, your soldiers plunge their spears into the sand. The silence of the desert is broken by the agonised hisses of Caarth and the gleeful bloodthirsty war cries of men. Caarth burst out from the sand but they hiss in dismay as they are held back by the nets. Your men pick off the helpless Caarth with ease as they writhe and struggle under the weight of the nets. Note the codeword *Odysseus* on your *Adventure Sheet*. However, the battle is far from over as more Caarth burst out from the sand brandishing wicked curved swords. Your men draw their swords and engage them in a desperate struggle. Turn to **16**.

68

You smash the orb on the floor and the smoke fills the room. You can't help but breathe it in and immediately feel drowsy. Before you can do anything, you collapse on the floor asleep. *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, you wake up a few minutes later and you may take the other globe of white smoke. Add the globe of white smoke to your equipment list. Turn to **107**. If you are Unlucky, you are found by some lizard man guards who promptly run you through with their swords. Your adventure ends here.

69

The temple of Ashra is large, but it is starting to show the wear of age. The inside of the temple is almost empty. It seems that the Old Gods have fallen out of favour with the people. An old priest in white robes carrying a crystal-topped staff approaches you. 'Welcome to the temple of Ashra, the light of the world. How may I help?' If you say that you wish to join the church of Ashra (you may not do this if you have the codeword *Vuh* on your *Adventure Sheet*), turn to **215**. Otherwise, you leave, turn to **177**.

70

As the spear flies through the air, another arrow strikes you (lose 2 STAMINA points). However, the spear guided by Telak's blessing strikes the archer in the chest. He topples over and does not get up. You run to the boat containing the archer's body to confirm that he is definitely dead. You retrieve your spear (cross the codeword *graze* from your *Adventure Sheet*) and head to your trireme. Turn to **12**.

71

Fury is rising up inside you. You want to snap this man's neck in two. If you have a dose of sedative, turn to **14**. If you do not, turn to **175**.

72

'You have what is needed to become a follower of Vuh.' The priest takes you to the altar, where he takes water from a font and drips it onto your forehead 'You will preserve the life of the world and protect it from the forces of darkness.' As the priest starts to chant, you notice a glow. The priest notices too and you both look to see that the water in the font is glowing. 'It seems that Vuh wants you to have a Ring of Life.' The priest gives you a silver ring inscribed with runes of good and life.' Add the Ring of Life to your equipment list. You may use the ring in combat at the end of a combat round. If you do, you can restore 6 STAMINA points. You may only do this once per combat. You are now an acolyte of Vuh. Write the codeword *Vuh* in your notes. Turn to **177**.

73

The sound of the battle attracts a dozen guards. They all look at the woman in bewilderment. You then search Ikunum's rooms while the guards, who do not trust the priest, keep watch. You find letters to various people talking about the time of Elim, the old god of darkness, and also about bringing down the king. Armed with the evidence of treason, you lead the guards to Ikunum and declare that he is under arrest. Ikunum merely smiles and vanishes in a puff of smoke.

You explain this all to the king who thanks you gravely. 'I am indebted to you for revealing this traitor to me. For your mission, what is mine is yours – you have the use of my men if you wish.' Add the codeword *crew* to your *Adventure Sheet*. 'I have been suspicious of insidious goings on for some time. Powerful priests have sprung up from nowhere and have integrated themselves amongst the rich and powerful. I was always suspicious of Ikunum and sent spies to find anything out about him. Two of them were murdered. I see who did it now. If you can find out anything, please tell me. Now you must go, for I have the affairs of state to attend to.' You thank the king, bow and return to the city. Turn to **177**.

74

You hurl your spear at one of the hydra's heads. It pierces an eye, and the hydra screams in agony. Cross the enchanted spear from your equipment list. 'Abandon ship!' you shout, and you all jump overboard just as the hydra brings its heads down upon your trireme, smashing it to smithereens. You start to swim desperately for Fire Island, glad that the hydra has turned its attention away from you. Turn to **33**.

75

These winged sandals bestow speed upon their wearer. You may use these sandals once this adventure. You may use them to act as if you do have the *Speed of Pangara* on one occasion or you may use them to increase your Attack Strength by 3 for one combat only. Turn to **54**.

76

You feel an agonising searing pain as a bolt of lightning descends from the sky and strikes you! Lose 8 STAMINA points. You wake up, covered in burns and bleeding from several wounds. It is dark and the storm has passed, but you are still in danger. If you do not get some serious healing soon then you will die from your wounds. You see a glow appear across the sea. It starts to approach the sandy shore behind you. If you decide to head back to the sandy beach to see what this glow is, turn to **139**. If you press on in the hope that you will get to Carsepolis in order to heal your wounds, turn to **154**.

77

The sorcerer's spell is complete. A blast of searing hot wind engulfs the battle. Your skin feels like it's on fire, and your throat and lungs burn as you gulp the air. Lose 4 STAMINA points. What is worse, the hot air has made the cold-blooded Caarth move faster. From now on, increase the Attack Strength of any Caarth you fight by 1. Finish your combat with the Caarth warrior. Turn to **218**.

78

Your great strength sends the Old One almost toppling over onto its side. It struggles to regain its balance as you draw your sword and face it. Despite its fearsome appearance, it is quite fragile.

OLD ONE SKILL 10 STAMINA 5

If you win, turn to **7**.

79

You walk straight into a wall of trees that you could have sworn weren't there before. Then you realise that you are surrounded by Treemen. You cannot run or fight against such huge odds. Their branches strike you repeatedly until you move no more. You will be compost for the Treemen.

80

You drink some of the liquid, but you spit it out. It is olive oil. If you wish to spread some on your skin, turn to **196**. If not, turn to **195**.

81

You go down to the docks where you see your trireme, a fine ship, ready to sail. All she needs is a crew and a destination. If you have the codewords *crew* and *dagger* on your *Adventure Sheet* and you wish to set sail, turn to **118**. If you do not have the word *crew* on your *Adventure Sheet* and if you wish to hire a crew here, turn to **3**. If you want to return to town, turn to **177**.

82

If you have the *Hubris* flaw, turn to **113**. If not, turn to **157**.

83

You strike Berem and the crowd goes wild with cheers. Men line up to sign up with you there and then. Add the codeword *crew* to your *Adventure Sheet*. You leave the tavern and return to town. Turn to **177**.

84

Surprisingly to everyone, not least yourself, you manage to close the gap between yourself and Atalanta until you and her are neck and neck. Can you manage one final push to victory? If you have the *Strength of Telak*, turn to **48**. Otherwise, *Test your Stamina*, adding 5 to the number rolled. If you succeed, turn to **48**. If you fail, turn to **4**.

85

You throw the golden apple so it lands in front of your opponent. Sure enough, distracted by its beauty, she stops to pick it up and inspect it. She then puts it in her robes and starts running again, but your ruse has bought you time to catch up with Atalanta. Turn to **84**.

86

Despite being highly polished so that it reflects like a mirror and being well decorated, this shield is not enchanted. However, it is no worse than your ordinary shield, so you keep it (note that your shield is reflective on your *Adventure Sheet*). Turn to **121**.

87

Your men rush at the Caarth, taking advantage of the distraction. Several Caarth are killed before they can resist. You see the champion impale one soldier with its huge double-headed sword and then hurl another through the air, ignoring the blows that your men land on it with spear and sword. You must kill this monster before it slays all of your men.

You must now fight the Caarth champion, who will perform a stunt in every combat round as long as its STAMINA is 10 or more. After determining Attack Strengths, roll 1 die. If you roll a 3~6, the Caarth champion has struck you with its sword and you lose an additional 2 STAMINA points. If you roll a 1 or 2, the Caarth has missed, allowing you to counterstrike so that it loses an additional 2 STAMINA points. You may try your own stunts after the Caarth champion.

CAARTH CHAMPION SKILL 11 STAMINA 12

If you win, turn to **58**.

88

This helmet was made by a powerful trickster mage for a warrior friend. The helmet bestows quickness of thought upon its bearer. You may use this helmet once this adventure to either act as if you have the *Cunning of Logaan* on one occasion or ensure that all of your heroic stunts succeed for one combat. Turn to **54**.

89

With a burst of inhuman speed, you sprint past the warrior and plunge your spear into the sorcerer, who collapses in a heap on the sand. Add the codeword *Perseus* to your *Adventure Sheet*. Turn to **214**.

90

You will have to fight your father. He movements are stiff and jerky, but he will advance on you relentlessly.

AGAMEMNON SKILL 9 STAMINA 16

If you win, add the codeword *slayer* to your *Adventure Sheet*. You charge at the priest, enraged and desperate for revenge. Turn to **51**.

91

Your last blow reduces the elemental to rubble. You have just enough time to see a blue robed wizard holding the dagger before he disappears into thin air. 'That was Erishum, a newly promoted wizard and social climber. I never trusted him,' says Platonus. 'We must discover exactly what he has stolen and what the consequences might be.' Turn to **201**.

92

This spear is enchanted to deal extra damage to reptiles and their ilk. Cross your old spear off your equipment list and replace it with this weapon. If you have the codewords *graze* and/or *heartseeker* on your *Adventure Sheet*, delete them. Turn to **121**.

93

'This ring will confer the life and strength of the forest into you.' While you are wearing this ring, increase your *Initial* STAMINA by 2 and you may deal 1 extra point of damage whenever you win an attack round (stunt damage remains unchanged). Turn to **48**.

94

You try your best to face your unseen opponent in the darkness.

UNKNOWN
ASSAILANT SKILL 12 STAMINA 12

If you win, turn to **46**.

95

'We are always looking for new acolytes, but only those who are close to the gods already.' If you have the codewords *Heracles*, *Odysseus* or *Perseus*, turn to **114**. Otherwise, the priest tells you to come back another time. Turn to **177**.

96

You draw your sword and prepare to fight the Treeman, who thrashes at you with its branches. If you have the *Cunning of Logaan*, turn to **216**. Otherwise, you must fight.

TREEMAN SKILL 10 STAMINA 20

If you *Escape* turn to **37**. If you win, turn to **166**.

97

You take a gulp of the liquid and immediately feel sleepy and happy.
You have drunk a sedative, used by the hunchback to knock out live victims for their zombification. Unless you have the *Strength of Telak*, subtract 1 from your attack strength in your next combat. You may take this sedative with you – there is enough for one more dose. You may use it as a sleeping potion or you may also use it on yourself, but it is only useful to you if you have the *Rage* flaw. If you are told to turn to a paragraph because you have the *Rage* flaw, you may instead drink this potion and continue as if you do not have the *Rage*. You may only do this once, and if you do not have the *Strength of Telak*, you must also subtract 1 from your Attack Strength in your next combat. Turn to **195**.

98

You rush to the boat as fast as you can with arrows whistling past you. Despite your speed, you are still struck (lose 2 STAMINA points) but you get to the boat to face the archer. Nervous, he drops his bow and draws a short sword. This is your fight now.

ARCHER SKILL 9 STAMINA 14

If you win, you return to your boat. Turn to **12**.

99

You try to give chase, but your legs collapse beneath you. Your breath gets more laboured and then you realise that the arrow was poisoned. The poison courses through your veins as blackness descends on your vision, never to lift.

100

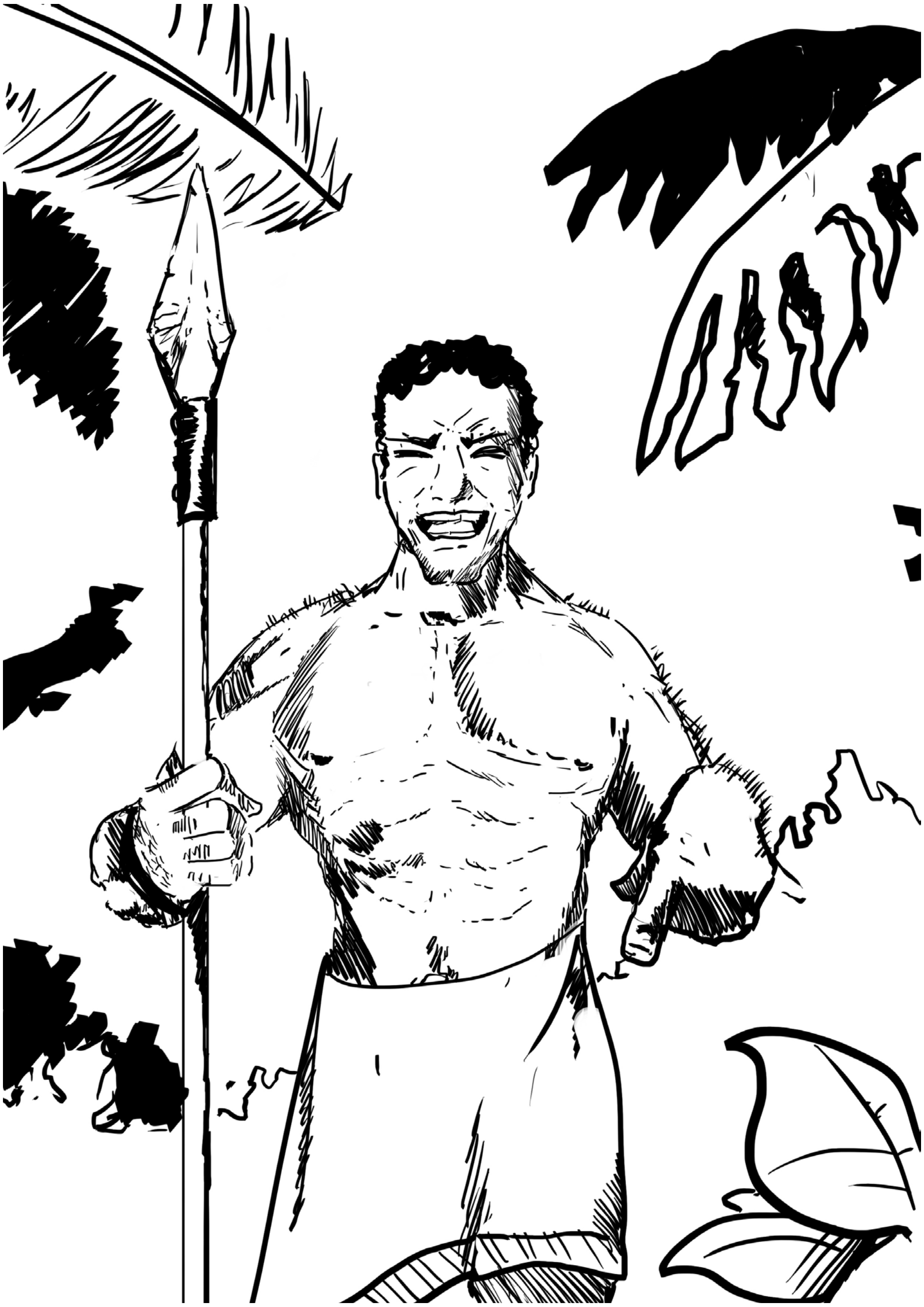
Bleeding from his wounds, the pirate captain crashes to the floor, dead. You cut off his head and return it to the merchant captain, who is overjoyed to finally see the bane of his business dead. The merchant offers you his crew to take you anywhere you like. Add the codeword *crew* to your *Adventure Sheet*. If you now also have the codeword *dagger* on your *Adventure Sheet*, you may set sail immediately (turn to **118**). Otherwise, you return to the city (turn to **177**).

101

The forest begins to thin out a little again. After several days' travel, you come to a camp full of rangers dressed in green and druids in white robes. Upon seeing you, two dozen rangers grab their bows and point them at you, ready to pincushion you with arrows if you make one false move. One of the druids approaches you. 'Welcome, hero of Carsepolis. We know who you are and why you are here. Nevertheless, you have trespassed on our lands and we require you to prove your worth. If you can do so, then you will be free to travel through our lands. Otherwise, you will have to turn back and skirt our woodland. It will add an extra day to your journey but that will be no great hardship for you, I'm sure. This may be the best option for you if you are faint of heart, for the penalty of failing our challenge is death.' If you have the *Hubris* flaw, turn to **56**. Otherwise, you may decide to accept the druid's challenge (turn to **193**), or skirt the woodland (turn to **116**).

102

You throw the golden apple so that it lands just in front of the finish line. Atalanta picks



up and admires the divine fruit, oblivious to you running past her and over the finish line. Turn to **48**.

103

The jungle gradually gives way to hills. When the area becomes clearer, you see a white temple in the distance. The central building is complete but there are unfinished surrounding buildings that have yet to be built. That is where your enemies are. It is where you will avenge your father. You make good time through the hills without meeting a soul. Then, when you are picking your way through a valley, you hear a shout. 'So this is the greatest hero of Carsepolis? If this is the best that the gods of life and light have to offer then darkness will surely descend upon Titan!' You look up to see a muscular man holding a spear. He looks down upon you with contempt before hurling the spear at you. If you have the *Achilles' Heel* flaw, turn to **142**. If not, turn to **194**.

104

The fire bolt strikes the shroud and then bounces back to strike the wizard! The wizard loses 1d6 STAMINA points. Deduct the value from his stamina. The wizard then holds up a wand and a buzzing red shaft of light emerges from it. The wizard wields it like a sword. You must fight the Elimite wizard Erishum. If you have the Staff of Ashra, it glows with a white light. If you fight him with the Staff of Ashra you will kill him as soon as you win an attack round (stunt damage remains the same).

WIZARD
ERISHUM (with
wand-sword) SKILL 11 STAMINA 10

If you win, turn to **107**.

105

You smash the globe on the ground and the room fills with acrid smoke that burns your eyes and lungs. Lose 2 STAMINA points. You flee the hut until the smoke clears. You may take the other globe of green smoke. You may smash it before a combat. If you do both you and your opponent(s) will lose 1 STAMINA point at the end of every combat round. Turn to **107**.

106

You draw your sword and face the champion, who grins with the idea of crushing you.

You must now fight the Caarth champion, who will perform a stunt in every combat round as long as its STAMINA is 10 or more. After determining Attack Strengths, roll 1 die. If you roll a 3~6, the Caarth champion has struck you with its sword, and you lose an additional 2 STAMINA points. If you roll a 1 or 2, the Caarth has missed, allowing you to counterstrike the Caarth so that it loses an additional 2 STAMINA points. You may try your own stunts after the Caarth.

CAARTH
CHAMPION SKILL 11 STAMINA 16

If you win, turn to **58**.

107

The wizard is dead. You search his hut to find several scrolls, books and glass orbs containing strange liquids and gases. You cannot make head or tail of the writing in the books, but if you wish, you could experiment with the glass orbs. There are two of each orb. You could smash one of them to see what happens.

An orb containing the black liquid?	Turn to **133**.
An orb containing some white smoke?	Turn to **68**.
An orb containing green smoke?	Turn to **105**.

You carry on. Turn to **103**.

108

This is a ring of the sun. This ring, when rubbed, will illuminate an area for you as a torch. However, it can also be used to unleash a searing blast of heat upon your opponent.' At the beginning of a combat, you may use the ring to deal 6 STAMINA points of damage to your opponent. However, this attack will also deal 3 STAMINA points of damage to you. Turn to **48**.

109

The potency of the poison is negated. You pull the arrow out of your arm and look around for the archer that ambushed you, but he is nowhere to be seen. If you did not throw your spear at the man, you continue your journey. Turn to **124**. If you did throw your spear at the man, turn to **209**.

110

You find yourself in a large cave. You light a torch and travel down a tunnel deeper into the cliff until you come to a large cavern with a pool in the centre. Around the side of the cavern, you see plenty of smaller pools glowing with an eerie light. Before you can move towards any of the pools, something stirs in the central pool. You see tentacles slowly crawling out of the pool. Then you see the giant, gruesome, slime-covered head that the tentacles are attached to. Then the rest of the bloated winged body of the beast rises up from the pool. Beady eyes stare at you and the creature advances with a roar. You have never seen such a bizarre beast but you have heard of the 'Old Ones' that stalked Titan during the first battle. All kinds of creatures were created at that time with the purpose of destroying the other side. You have come across one of the ancient creatures of the Dark Gods. You hold your nerve. If you throw your spear at this creature, turn to **119**. If you charge at the creature, turn to **170**. If you flee out of the cave, turn to **185**.

111

You are about to hurl insults back at the Elimite, but then the bat amulet starts to feel hot. You whirl round to see a woman dressed in black advancing upon you with a dagger. The Elimite was trying to distract you so this assassin could kill you. You face the assassin in a fair fight.

ASSASSIN SKILL 10 STAMINA 12

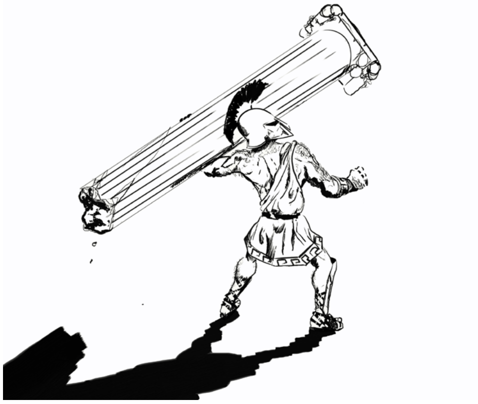
If you win, turn to **160**.

112

This sword is enchanted. If you *Test your Luck* before combat, you may increase your Attack Strength by 1 for that combat if you are Lucky. If you are Unlucky, you must reduce your Attack Strength by 1 for that combat. Turn to **121**.

113

If you have an obsidian bat amulet, turn to **111**. If you do not, you hurl insults back at the Elimite until you feel a repeated, stabbing pain in your back. While the Elimite was distracting you, an ASSASSIN has sneaked up behind you. You feel a sharp pain in your head and all goes black.



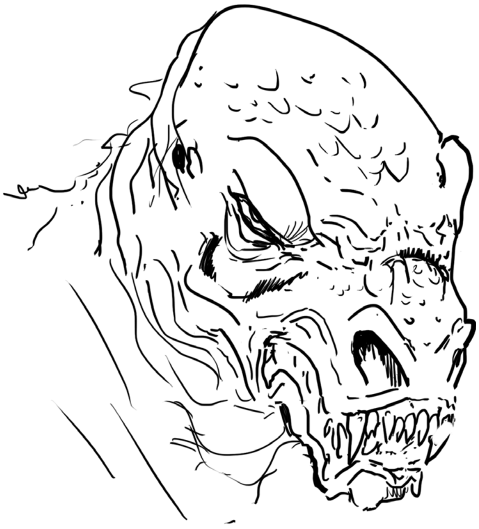
114

'You could become a follower of Vuh, god of life, but first you must prove your worth. There are many in this city serving the dark gods who seek only to take life away from the good people who reside here. We have heard that a corrupt priesthood is growing in influence in this city. They do so by silencing their loudest critics. It took us a while to find out how these people were killed in their beds at night when no one had forced the door, but we later found the culprit. It is a life stealer, a winged abomination that usually lives in the mountains. Somehow, the evil priests have gained control of one and they are using it to kill their enemies. Destroy this life stealer and you can become an acolyte of Vuh. I abhor these monsters. You will want to know where it is. I have learnt how to attract its attention. I will perform a ritual in the square. Its masters will sense the use of powerful good magic and send the life stealer to snuff out the source. That is when you will kill it.' If you agree to this, turn to **115**. If you do not want to do this, you return to town. Turn to **177**.

115

So be it. When darkness falls, you and the priest enter one of the squares in Carsepolis, accompanied by many younger priests. The younger priests get in a circle, light incense and begin a chant as the priest stands at the centre of the circle, arms raised. After a few minutes of chanting, a glow starts to surround the priest. Then you hear the beating of wings over the chanting followed by the sound of something landing in the square. The priests stop their chanting and shine their lanterns in the direction of the sound. You then see the thin, sinewey winged humanoid with a long face and big ears. It momentarily squints as the light strikes its face but then it recovers and approaches you, growling. 'Back, my acolytes!' orders the priest as you advance on it, weapon drawn. It welcomes your attack with a grin of sharp teeth. The first time your STAMINA falls to 12 or below in this combat, the priest casts a spell of life upon you which restores 6 STAMINA points and allows you to add 1 to your Attack Strength for the next 3 combat rounds. He may only do this once.

LIFE STEALER SKILL 12 STAMINA 18



If you win, you go back to the temple. Turn to **72**.

116

You turn back and head in the direction that takes you out of the wood. If you have killed a Treeman, turn to **79**. If not, you make good time through the woods and plains. You journey for several days until one morning when the sky is red from the dawn Sun. As the first light spreads across the land, you see the shining city of Carsepolis in the distance. You are almost home. Turn to **183**.

117

'You have that divine light within you,' says the priest. He lowers the crystal tip of the staff to your forehead and starts to mumble. As he does, the crystal starts to glow. The glow gets brighter until there is an almost blinding flash of light. 'It has never done that before,' says the priest, shocked. 'It appears that Ashra has chosen you for something great and wants you to use her staff to fight a great darkness in this world. If you were to strike a follower of the Old God of darkness, Elim, with this staff they would be obliterated forever.' Add the Staff of Ashra to your *Adventure Sheet* and put the codeword *Ashra* in your notes. You return to the city. Turn to **177**.

118

You head down to the docks to meet your crew. Then you hear a whistling sound and an arrow hits you in the chest. Lose 4 STAMINA points. You look around to see that the archer from outside Carsepolis is now on a boat some way down the harbour, and he is firing arrows at you at an alarming speed. Another arrow grazes your shoulder (lose 2 STAMINA points). If you throw your spear at the archer, turn to **125**. If you run to meet him in hand-to-hand combat, turn to **211**.

119

Your spear strikes the creature in its bloated body. It roars in pain, and green slime spurts out of the wound. You draw your sword to finish this beast off. Despite its fearsome appearance, it is quite fragile.

OLD ONE SKILL 11 STAMINA 5

If you win, turn to **7**.

120

You let the courtier go, and he thanks you profusely. He offers you a gift for sparing his life. It is a ring of charm – wearing it will make people react more favourably towards you (Add the ring of charm to your equipment list). Obviously, it does not work on people who are enraged with you. You take the ring and tell the courtier that you never want to see him again. Turn to **174**.

121

The markets sell all kinds of goods for the people of Carsepolis. There are no common items that you need, for you can get them all at your mansion, but there are several rare and magical items being sold at the market. You may buy any one of the following and turn to the appropriate page.

A potion of healing (100 Gold Pieces).	Turn to **197**.
A lucky charm (150 Gold Pieces).	Turn to **39**.
A silver throwing dagger (250 Gold Pieces).	Turn to **188**.
A masterfully crafted shiny shield (100 Gold Pieces).	Turn to **86**.
A finely wrought sword (500 Gold Pieces).	Turn to **112**.
A spear with a metal haft which is as light as wood (500 Gold Pieces).	Turn to **92**.
A warhammer made from a metal with a blue sheen (500 Gold Pieces).	Turn to **65**.

When you have finished in the market, you return to the city. Turn to **177**.

122

'If you wish to become an acolyte of light, then you must face the darkness,' says the priest as he beckons you to follow him down some stairs into the depths of the temple and below the city. 'Much darkness is buried but a true acolyte of Ashra must bring it forward and banish it.' As he finishes speaking, he comes to the end of a corridor where he lifts up a flagstone to reveal darkness. 'You must face the creatures of darkness down there,' he says. You descend the steps into the inky blackness. The scant light from the surface is extinguished as the priest moves the flagstone back into place. Turn to **217**.

123

In an effort to hire the crew, you tell them of your exploits at sea which get more and more preposterous with each telling. You sailed to Khul solo, you slew the Kraken and you captured the seven pirate lords of Allansia. Then, a battle scarred man with an eye patch says, 'No, I killed the seven pirate lords of Allansia.' This is Berem, hero, sailor and captain, who did actually capture the seven pirate lords of Allansia, but you are not going to let the facts get in the way of your mighty heroic stories, so you call him a liar. 'Then we will duel to see who is telling the truth.' You follow the man outside, where you both draw swords (you do not get the use of your shield in this combat, so you cannot bash and you cannot reduce Berem's Attack Strength). The combat will go on until one person has won a combat round. Damage from stunts does not count.

BEREM SKILL 12 STAMINA 18

If you are the first person to win a combat round, turn to **83**. If Berem is the first person to win a combat round, turn to **11**.

124

Eventually, you come to the gates of Caresepolis. The guards stand to attention and salute as you approach them. You walk through the gates and along the streets to where your house can be found. The atmosphere in the city is glum – it seems that a cloud has descended upon the people here. You walk up the stairs to your mansion where your steward is standing at the door, a look of melancholy upon his face. Upon seeing you, his face brightens. 'My Lord…' he says.

'Greetings, Stelios. I will greet you properly when I have dealt with the infestation in my house.' You stride down the corridors, following the sound of raucous merriment until you come to the banquet room. Your mother sits at the head of the long table bedecked with a glorious repast which is being torn apart by a score of drunk and uncouth courtiers like pigs feasting on caviar. Upon seeing you, the merriment stops. 'I am the master of this house and you will all leave.'

'Oh yeah?' says one of the drunken courtiers, almost falling over as he gets up. 'You won't be ordering me about when I'm your daddy.' Roars of laughter go up from the diners. You remain stone faced. 'If that's the case, then you're going to have to kill me.'

The young men all get up and draw short swords, eager for combat in the hope that you might kill some of their rivals. They all advance upon you with a drunken overconfidence. Once they are ten paces away, you draw your own sword and prepare your shield. You are going to enjoy teaching these men a lesson. Fight the courtiers as a single creature. As long as the courtiers' STAMINA is 10 or more, you must lose 1 STAMINA point at the end of every combat round as you cannot block all of their blows.

COURTIERS SKILL 8 STAMINA 18

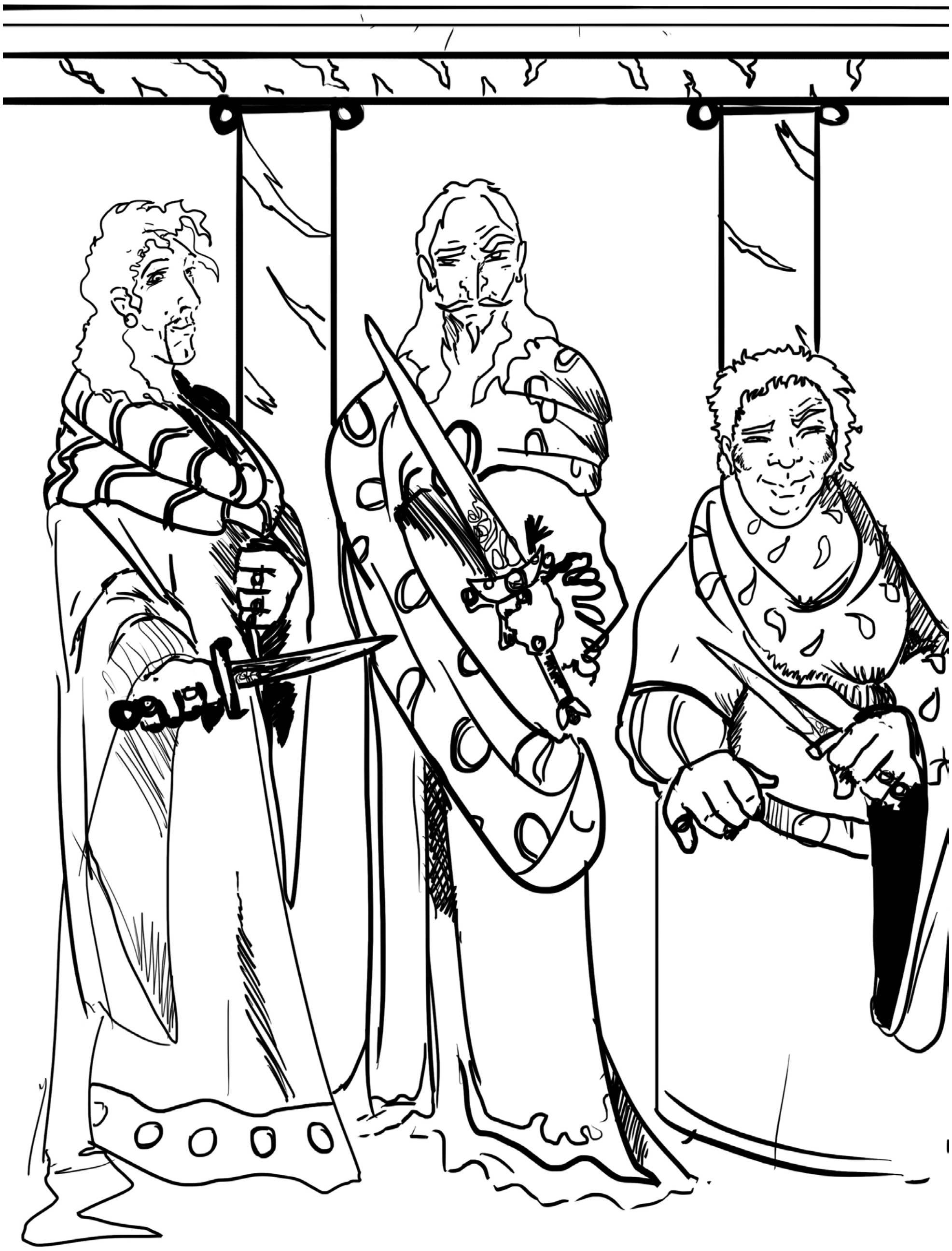
If you win, turn to **20**.

125

You hurl your spear at the archer as he looses off more arrows at you. If you have both the codewords *graze* and *heartseeker* on your *Adventure Sheet*, turn to **70**. Otherwise, turn to **41**.

126

You put your shield behind your back, pick up your torch and run into the cave. Out of the darkness flies a blob of green goo which envelops you in a strange sticky substance. If you have the *Strength of Telak*, you rip the goo off your body. Otherwise, it slows you down. Subtract 1 from your Attack Strength in your combat with the hunchback unless you have the *Strenght of Telak*. Then the hunchback flies out of the darkness at you with a dagger in one hand and a small glass globe full of black liquid in the other, screaming at you to die. At the end of the first three attack rounds, the hunchback will throw the globe at you. When it breaks open, the liquid ignites. After determining attack strengths, roll 1 die. If you roll a 4~6, the globe hits you and the liquid ignites all over you. Lose 4 STAMINA points. If you roll a 1~3, you strike the hunchback and he loses 2 STAMINA points. You may perform your own stunts after the hunchback. You do not have time to grab your shield for this combat and so you may not get its bonus or perform the shield bash stunt for this combat. You desire to kill this disgusting creature, and your revulsion only grows when you discover that it bleeds yellow blood that boils and hisses.



HUNCHBACK SKILL 8 STAMINA 9

If you win, you stick your sword into the hunchback's chest, and it topples over and crashes onto the stone floor. As it hits the floor, it falls apart and yellow liquid spreads all over the place, steaming and hissing. If you wish to explore the cave, turn to **195**. If you wish to quit this place, turn to **148**.

127

You tell the Treeman of the Caarth, the growing desert and of the insidious threat of Carsepolis. ‘Hmmm,’ responds the Treeman, ‘I care little for the affairs of humans but I do not want the land to become a desert. Here – take this. It is food of the gods. Something you will need for your quest.’ The Treeman lowers its branches to present you with a bronze apple. Add the bronze apple of prowess to your equipment list. You may eat the bronze apple at any time you are asked if you have the *Strength of Telak* or the *Speed of Pangara* heroic power and continue for that one option as if you have them. You thank the Treeman and bid it farewell. Turn to **101**.

128

You have a joyful time at the dance and feast. The druids tend to your wounds (restore your STAMINA to its *Initial* level). In the morning, you bid Atalanta and the rest of the tribe goodbye and continue your journey. You make good time through the woods and plains. You journey for several days until one morning when the sky is red from the dawn Sun. As the first light spreads across the land, you see the shining city of Carsepolis in the distance. You are almost home. Turn to **183**.

129

You charge at the elemental, but you cannot damage it. It crushes you beneath its stone firsts.

130

The sorcerer’s spell is complete. A blast of searing hot wind engulfs the battle. Your skin feels like it’s on fire, and your throat and lungs burn as you gulp the air. Lose 4 STAMINA points. What is worse, the hot air has made the cold blooded Caarth move faster. From now on, increase the SKILL of any Caarth you fight by 1. Turn to **206** to finish your combat.

131

Atalanta widens the gap between the two of you, to the whoops and cheers of the crowd. All is lost... unless you have some way of stopping her. If you have a golden apple, turn to **85**. If not, turn to **145**.

132

You put the drop on your tongue and immediately feel more alive. The colours seem brighter and the smells are stronger. You have drunk a drop of the elixir of life. Increase your *Initial* STAMINA by 2 and restore your STAMINA to that value. Turn to **195**.

133

The guard lets you into the palace with a salute. Upon seeing your father’s personal seal, he immediately runs to tell the king in person. A few minutes later, the king arrives to the antechamber. He reads the letter. ‘My condolences for your loss, young one. He was a great warrior and a skilled diplomat. I could not have asked for a better advisor. It seems that he was helping me to his last breath. As you have taken it upon yourself to complete his work, what is mine is yours. I can offer you my men to help you with anything you may wish to do.’ Add the codeword crew to your adventure sheet. ‘Between you and me, I have been suspicious of insidious goings on for some time. Powerful priests have sprung up from nowhere and have integrated themselves amongst the rich and powerful. There is one in this palace who I am suspicious of, but I have found nothing out yet. I keep him close so that I can keep an eye on him. I have sent spies to investigate him but they have been murdered. If you can find out anything, please tell me. Now you must go for I have the affairs of state to attend to.’ You thank the king, bow and return to the city. Turn to **177**.

134

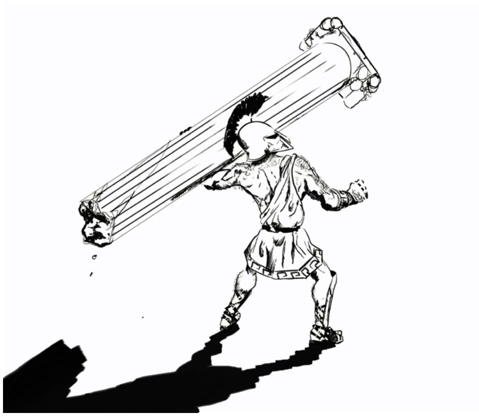
You approach the large doors of the Wizards’ Guild and knock on the brass knocker. A young apprentice in blue robes answers the door and welcomes you to the guild. The apprentice asks you how he may be of help. If you have the codeword *archive* on your *Adventure Sheet*, turn to **27**. Otherwise, you ask to see the head of the guild with an urgent request. Turn to **190**. If you have already asked to see the head of the guild and you don’t have the codeword *archive* on your *Adventure Sheet*, there is nothing left for you to do here, so you leave. Turn to **177**.

135

You hold the shield up so it catches the Sun’s light and shine it in the face of the archer as you run to his boat. Arrows whistle past you as you run. Despite the archer being blinded, you are still struck by an arrow (lose 2 STAMINA points), but you get to the boat to face your foe. Nervous, he drops his bow and draws a short sword. This is your fight now.

ARCHER SKILL 9 STAMINA 14

If you win, you return to your boat. Turn to **12**.



136

As you grasp this sword, you feel the tingle of magic and heat run up your arm. This enchanted sword will engulf itself in flames in combat. When you hit your opponent, the flames will spread all over them, dealing massive damage. Add the fire sword to your equipment list. After you have struck a blow to an opponent in combat (not through stunt damage), they will lose 1 STAMINA point at the end of each attack round after that they have been set on fire. Also, if you successfully *Test your Luck* in combat in order to deal more damage, you will deal 4 extra points of damage, rather than 2. Turn to **54**

137

The temple of Logaan looks like any other building, but all know of the strange goings on within its walls. Priests wearing multi-coloured robes enter and leave the building by the front door. You enter the building and are approached by the high priest. ‘Welcome to the temple of the tricksters my lord. How may we help you?’ If you have the codeword *Odysseus* on your *Adventure Sheet*, turn to **10**. Otherwise, you may pay 50 Gold Pieces for a blessing that will restore 1 LUCK point (you may do this any number of times). When you have finished, you search another part of the city. Turn to **174**.

138

Your journey takes you through a land which gets more and more wooded as you travel it. Eventually, you must force your way through the undergrowth in order to continue. At dusk, you stop to rest, but, anxious to get home and save your mother, you press onwards. When it gets dark, you light a torch, but this brings little comfort as the fire pinpoints your location to beasts and bandits. After several hours of walking, you come to a clearing. At the centre of the clearing is a very tall tree bearing beautiful apples. These are not just any apples, as they have metallic colourings: gold, silver and bronze. You have heard of the remarkable power of such apples, and they are much sought after. If you want to get some enchanted apples, turn to **23**. If you wish to continue, turn to **101**.

139

Desperately, you hobble down to the beach. As your foot touches the sand, the glow flies towards you until it is almost upon you. Then you see what it is – a beautiful woman in golden robes hovers above the ground, bathed in the light of the glow. She notices your pain and a look of sympathy crosses her face. Then she flies past you and enters a previously unnoticed cave at the foot of the cliff that you just climbed. If you wish to follow her, turn to **110**. If you are anxious to return to Carsepolis to get some healing, you climb the cliff again with your bleeding, aching limbs (lose 1 STAMINA point) and continue your journey. Turn to **154**.

140

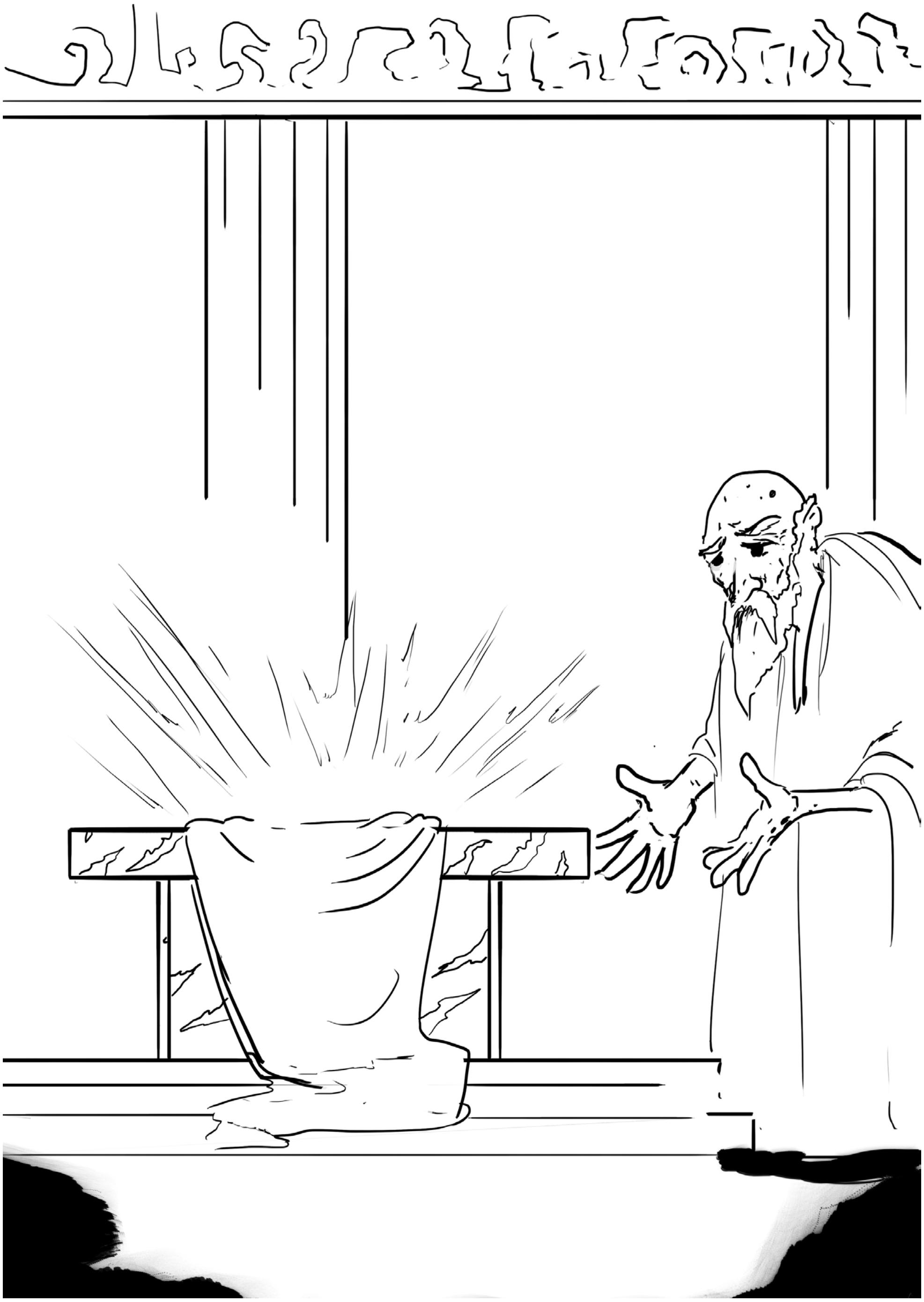
You climb the outcrop but as you do, you graze your leg on a sharp rock (lose 1 STAMINA point make a note of the codeword *graze* on your *Adventure Sheet*). Once you have recovered your spear, you continue your journey. Wary of further ambushes, you climb onto higher ground for the final leg of your journey. Turn to **124**.

141

Just as you have finished with your first attempt, you hear a rustling in the leaves behind you. You turn around and you are amazed to see a tree moving towards you. It is a TREEMAN. 'You shouldn't be trying to take my apples,' it says in a slow booming voice. If you tell the Treeman your story, turn to **127**. Otherwise, if you want to get any more apples, you will have to fight the Treeman (turn to **96**), or you could flee (turn to **37**).

142

If you have the Shroud of Vuh, turn to **181**. If you do not, the spear finds its mark in your neck. Bleeding profusely, you collapse to the ground and drown in your own blood.



143

Something vibrates inside your pack. You open the pack to reveal that the golden chalice that is vibrating. The priest looks upon the chalice in awe. 'This is one of the lost artefacts of Vuh. How did you get it?' You tell him your story. 'Then it seems that Vuh has great things in store for you. There is something you must have.' The priest takes the chalice from you (cross it off your equipment list) and takes you to the altar at the head of the temple. Upon the altar is a white shroud. 'This is the shroud of Vuh. It is said that anyone who returns the chalice to the temple will need this shroud to help them achieve a great victory over the followers of Elim, god of darkness and Vuh's enemy. The shroud will reflect hostile magic cast by an Elimite back upon them. It may also protect you in other ways in order to preserve your life.' Add the Shroud of Vuh to your equipment list. You thank the priest and return to the city. Turn to **177**.

144

You show the apprentice your father's letter. Upon seeing the seal, he immediately runs to fetch Platonus the guildmaster. He greets you warmly and offers his condolences for the death of your father. He reads the letter with great worry. 'We must search the archives.' Platonus leads you down several winding stairs into a huge cavernous room with shelves stretching for as far as you can see. Upon the shelves are scrolls, books and artefacts of all descriptions. You are looking for a needle in a haystack. However, Platonus mumbles something and a small glowing orb flies out of his hand and between the shelves. 'It is a spell of finding,' he explains. 'It will find the oldest thing here.' You follow the wizard to where the glow is. It is hovering over a plain looking box made of a metal with a blue sheen. It sticks out from the other artefacts because it is not decorated. If it were not for the strange colour of the metal, it would look like any other battered metal box. Cautiously, you open the box. As soon as you do, it seems that the lights dim. There is a dagger inside, made of black steel and surrounded by an aura of evil and darkness. You look upon it for barely a moment before there is a crash and you are engulfed in dust and smoke. When the dust clears, you see that a huge EARTH ELEMENTAL has broken its way through the floor and now faces you, ready to crush you under its giant fists. If you do not have an enchanted weapon, Platonus waves his hand and your weapon crackles with magical energy. If you have an enchanted warhammer, it will deal 2 extra points of damage to the earth elemental if you win an attack round (stunt damage remains unchanged) The earth elemental will deal 4 STAMINA points of damage to you if it wins an attack round (stunt-related damage remains unchanged). At the end of every combat round, deduct 2 points from the Earth Elemental's STAMINA as Platonus is using his magic against it. You must fight it!

EARTH
ELEMENTAL SKILL 12 STAMINA 18

If you win, turn to **91**.

145

As you cross the finish line last you run into a group of rangers, bows at the ready. There is no avoiding them as half a dozen arrows fly into your chest and pierce your heart. You are dead before you hit the ground.

146

The bracelet has healing powers and it will make you immune to any poisons. For the rest of this gamebook, if you are told to lose STAMINA through poison, you may ignore this instruction. Also, if you ever read the sentence 'The poison courses through your veins', add 10 to the paragraph that you are on and turn to that new paragraph. At the end of each combat, the bracelet will restore 3 STAMINA points.

Turn to **48**.

147

The hydra's heads come crashing down onto your trireme, smashing it to smithereens. The last thing you see is a huge mouth lined with teeth descending upon you.

148

You leave the cave and its vile stench of evil and death to continue traipsing through the mountains for several days of uneventful but exhausting travel. One morning, when the sky is red from the dawn Sun and the first light spreads across the land, you see the shining city of Carsepolis in the distance. You are almost home. Turn to **183**.

149

You taste the oily liquid, but it has no effect. You then rub some on your skin, but that has no effect either. You then dip your sword into the liquid. As you pull it out, you notice that it is glowing. You lazily bring your sword down on a boulder, cleaving it in two. You have found an oil of enchantment. For the rest of the adventure, your sword counts as an enchanted weapon and you may increase the amount of damage you deal in combat by 1 if you win an attack round (stunt damage remains unchanged). Turn to **195**.

150

You smash the globe at your father's feet. He takes in a breath and collapses to the floor asleep. You hear the priest curse as you hold your breath and charge at him. Turn to **51**.

151

Without a word, the woman holds forth her hand, offering you a golden chalice. She motions to one of the glowing pools around the cavern. You dip the chalice into a pool and drink the water. Immediately, you feel better. You look at your wounds to see them healing up and your pain subsiding. You feel stronger than you ever have felt. Increase your *Initial* STAMINA by 2 and restore your STAMINA to that level. You are now immune to poisons. For the rest of this gamebook, if you are told to lose STAMINA through poison, you may ignore this instruction. Also, if you ever read the sentence 'The poison courses through your veins,' add 10 to the paragraph that you are on and turn to that new paragraph.

Once you have drunk the water, you notice that the glow has vanished along with the golden chalice. Turn to **54**.

152

Your father wakes up with a start and you embrace each other joyfully. You both return to the shore where you see the slaves chasing the few remaining lizard men into the jungle. When they see you, they cheer and lead you to a dock where there are a fleet of triremes moored. You and your father lead the slaves back to Carsepolis where you immediately plan a feast. Your mother, upon seeing your father alive, weeps with joy. You all enjoy a wonderful feast where there is much laughter and dancing. The king promises that he will purge the agents of Elim from the city and thanks you for destroying their leadership. Turn to **186**.

153

The drink really gets to your head. You go from happy to irritable. Then someone walks into you, knocking four jars of mead out of your hands and onto the ground. Before anyone can say anything, you snap and slam your fist into the man's face, sending him flying across the room. One of the revellers tries to stop you, but you kick him away and he goes flying into a table. Then you draw your sword. The patrons of the inn start to panic and flee, screaming to get out. Two nervous guards appear and face you with their spears. You leap at the crowd, roaring with bloodlust, but the guards jab at you with their spears (lose 3 STAMINA points). This keeps you at bay long enough for the patrons to escape the tavern, and soon a whole squad of guards appears to keep you confined. Livid at being trapped in the tavern, you go on a rampage, smashing bottles, furniture and windows until the booze finally overcomes you and you collapse, unconscious, to the floor.

You wake up in a cell with a splitting headache, full of regret for what you did (lose 2 LUCK points). You pay the innkeeper compensation for ruining his inn (deduct 500 Gold Pieces from your *Adventure Sheet*. If you do not have this much money, deduct all of your money from your *Adventure Sheet*). When you have done that, you are set free. Turn to **177**.

154

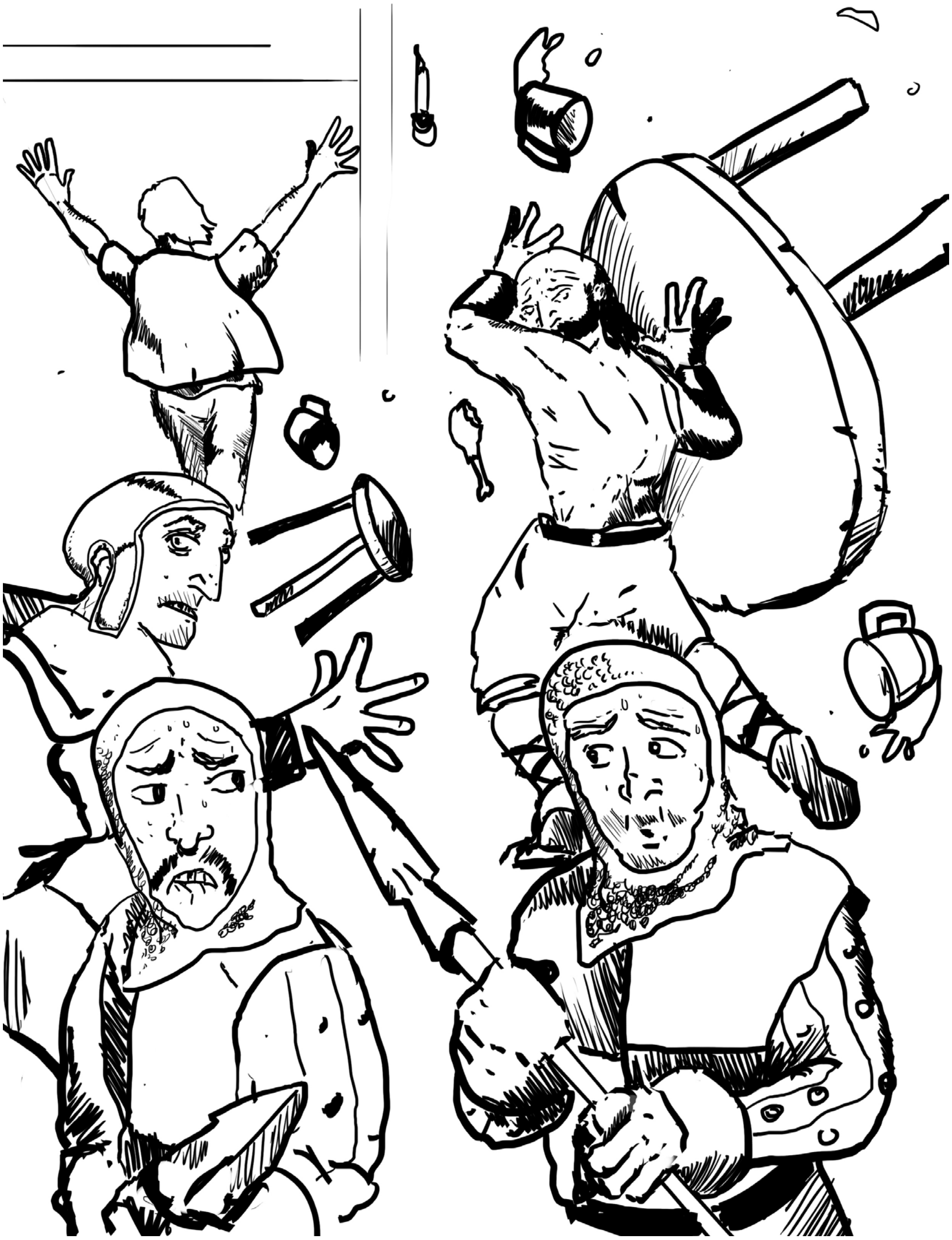
The journey is long and painful. Every step you take sends agonising pain shooting up your legs. The storm has passed, so you light a torch to illuminate your passage. You are not happy with it, however, as it makes you an obvious target for monsters. Your worst fears are realised when, on top of a cliff, you hear cries in the sky. They are not, however, the cries of any bird. You look up to see a flock of HARPIES approaching you from the sea, eager to find mortals to torment and murder. They have seen you, and they are approaching with speed. The only way you can avoid them is by leaping into the sea. If you do so, turn to **202**. If you face them in combat, you draw your sword and meet their headlong rush. Fight the flock of harpies as a single creature.

HARPIES SKILL 10 STAMINA 18

If you decide to escape by jumping into the sea, turn to **202**. If you win, turn to **45**.

155

With new vigour and hope, you leave the cave and continue your journey. The rest of your journey is uneventful. You spend several days walking along the coast before you turn off to head inland. Eventually one morning, as the red glow of the dawn casts its light across the land, you see the shining city of Carsepolis in the distance. Turn to **183**.



156

You continue your journey to Carsepolis. The storm has passed over, so you light a torch to illuminate your passage. You are not happy with it, however, as it makes you an obvious target for monsters. Your worst fears are realised when, on top of a cliff, you hear cries in the sky. They are not, however, the cries of any bird. You look up to see a flock of HARPIES approaching you from the sea, eager to find mortals to torment and murder. They have seen you and they are approaching you with speed. The only way you can avoid them is by leaping into the sea. If you do so, turn to **202**. If you face them in combat, you draw your sword and meet their headlong rush. Fight the flock of harpies as a single creature.

HARPIES SKILL 10 STAMINA 18

If you decide to escape by jumping into the sea, turn to **202**. If you win, the rest of your journey is uneventful. You spend several days walking along the coast before you turn off to head inland. Eventually one morning, as the red glow of the dawn casts its light across the land, you see the shining city of Carsepolis in the distance. You are almost home. Turn to **183**.

157

Your senses warn you of something. You whirl round to see a woman dressed in black advancing upon you with a dagger. The Elimite was trying to distract you so this assassin could kill you. You face the assassin in a fair fight. If you have the *Achilles' Heel* flaw and the assassin rolls an 11 or 12 for her Attack Strength and wins the combat round, then she plunges her dagger into your neck, killing you instantly.

ASSASSIN SKILL 10 STAMINA 12

If you win, turn to **160**.

158

'I see that you are a mighty warrior who has achieved great things but has even greater deeds planned. Come with me.' The priest takes you into a room where a shiny metal shield rests on a plinth. The priest speaks a word and images start to appear on the shield. They are too quick for you to see clearly, but you see yourself in a jungle somewhere, then on your trireme in the sea. You then see yourself amongst some wizards. The images fade and the priest turns to you. 'You have great trials ahead of you, my lord. There is a powerful enemy in this city searching for a long forgotten artefact. It appears to have been buried in the archives of the Wizards' Guild. Go with my blessings and good luck.' Add the codeword *archive* to your *Adventure Sheet*. The priest also blesses your spear so that it will seek the heart of anyone who has bathed it in blood. Add the codeword *heartseeker* to your *Adventure Sheet*. The priest also blesses you with strength of arms in battle. Add 1 to your Attack Strength in your next combat. You leave the temple to search elsewhere. turn to **177**.

159

Your spear flies through the air and hits the man in the arm. You hear him yelp in pain before he runs off, and you give chase. Turn to **99**.

160

With no more ruses, the ELIMITE CHAMPION leaps down from his position on the hill and draws a sword, ready to face you in single combat. As long as the Elimite champion's STAMINA is 10 or more, it will try a stunt after the Attack Strengths are decided. Roll 1 die. If you roll a 3~6, you lose 2 extra STAMINA points. If you roll a 1 or 2, the champion loses 2 extra STAMINA points. You may try your own stunts after the champion.

ELIMITE CHAMPION SKILL 12 STAMINA 19

If you win, turn to **34**.

161

This golden armband bestows strength upon its wearer. You may use this armband once to either act as if you have the *Strength of Telak* on one occasion or increase the damage you deal in combat by 4 when you win an attack round (not through stunt damage) for one combat. Turn to **54**.

162

This silver ring is a ring of restoration. Add the silver ring to your equipment list. You may use it once this adventure to restore your SKILL, STAMINA and LUCK scores to their *Initial* level. Turn to **54**.

163

The lightning bolt strikes the shroud and then bounces back to strike the wizard! The wizard loses 2d6 +2 STAMINA points. If he loses 10 STAMINA points or more, he is dead. Turn to 107. Otherwise, deduct the value from his STAMINA. The wizard then holds up a wand and a buzzing red shaft of light emerges from it. The wizard wields it like a sword. You must fight the Elimite wizard Erishum. If you have the Staff of Ashra, it glows with a white light. If you fight him with the Staff of Ashra you will kill him as soon as you win an attack round (stunt damage remains the same).

WIZARD ERISHUM (with wand-sword) SKILL 11 STAMINA 10

If you win, turn to **107**.

164

You climb the steps of the temple and enter it without hindrance. Inside, you see a single old white robed man holding a black steel dagger. 'Your coming was prophesised, young one, as was your sacrifice, but not by me. Here is the one that will offer you up to Elim.' A man walks out from behind a pillar. You gasp in surprise as you realise that it is your father! 'You all thought he was dead, but the poison merely put him in a death-like state, enough for me to control him. He will return to Carsepolis where he will do my bidding and tighten my grip on the royal family there. Now kill your child!'

You father slowly advances upon you, sword drawn. His blank face does not show any acknowledgement of your pleas. There might be some way you can stop him without killing him. If you have your father's ring, turn to **40**. If you have a globe of white smoke, turn to **150**. Otherwise, turn to **90**.

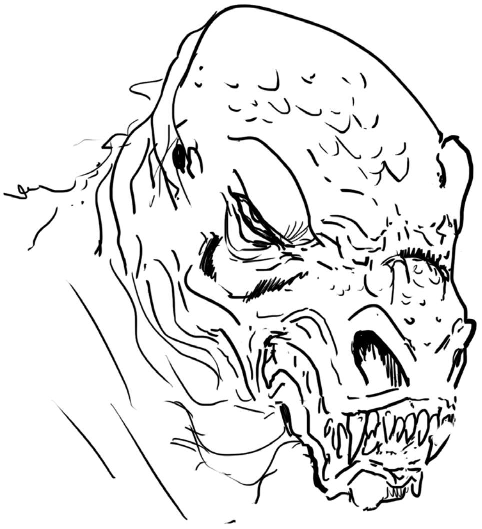
165

Your light source banishes the darkness except for a patch in front of you. Your enemy is the darkness itself! The shadow monster momentarily shrinks from the light but then starts to advance upon you. You

fight it and try to avoid its chilling touch.

SHADOW SKILL 10 STAMINA 12

If you defeat it, turn to **46**.

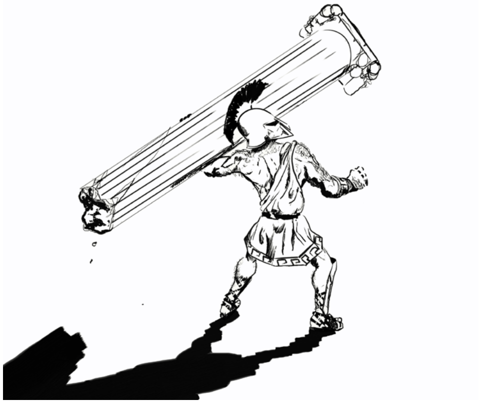


166

The Treeman falls to the ground with a loud creak and a crash. You find a bronze apple amongst its branches. Add the bronze apple of prowess to your equipment list. You may eat the bronze apple at any time you are asked if you have the *Strength of Telak* or the *Speed of Pangara* heroic power and continue for that one option as if you have them. You then notice many other trees rustling and creaking. Not wanting to fight a horde of trees, you make yourself scarce. Turn to **101**.

167

With a heavy heart, you pick up your father's corpse and return to the shore. The lizard men are fleeing into the jungle after the slaves' rebellion. When they see you, the former slaves cheer and guide you to a fleet of triremes moored at a dock. You take one and lead the slaves back to Carsepolis where you give your father a proper burial. Then you take up the mantle of ruler of the house with a vow to do so as well as your father did.



168

Silently, you signal your men to take up their positions. Then, when they are ready, poised for your order, you scream your battle cry. As one, your soldiers plunge their spears into the sand. The silence of the desert is broken by the agonised hisses of Caarth and the gleeful bloodthirsty war cries of men. The battle is far from over, however, as more Caarth burst out from the sand, wielding wickedly curved swords. A leather clad Caarth warrior stands before you, its cold eyes betraying no emotion as it closes in for the kill.

CAARTH WARRIOR SKILL 10 STAMINA 12

If you win, turn to **16**.

169

You stride up to the hut to see an old man in blue robes of the Wizards' Guild of Carsepolis sitting at a desk hunched over a book. If you enter the hut and greet him, turn to **172**. If you burst into the hut and attack him, turn to **212**. If you want to leave him and continue your journey, turn to **24**.

170

You charge the creature and slam into it, pushing it backwards. If you have the *Strength of Telak*, turn to **78**. Otherwise, you draw your sword and face the Old One. Despite its fearsome appearance, it is quite fragile.

OLD ONE SKILL 11 STAMINA 7

If you win, turn to **7**.

171

You drink this liquid and feel a twinge as it slides down your throat. Then you see a label on the beaker. It reads 'Poison'. You drop the beaker, which smashes on the stone ground, and await your fate, yet nothing happens. Then you remember. The word poison is also used for poison antidotes. What you have drunk will make you immune to poison for a while. For the rest of this gamebook, if you are told to lose STAMINA through poison, you may ignore this instruction. Also, if you ever read the sentence 'The poison courses through your veins,' add 10 to the paragraph that you are on and turn to that new paragraph.

Turn to **195**.

172

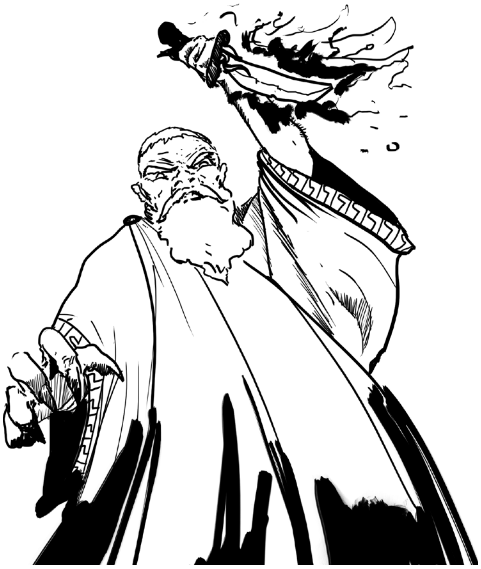
You enter the hut and greet the old man. He looks up, stands, and points at you. A bolt of fire shoots out of his finger and flies towards you. If you are wearing the Shroud of Vuh, turn to **104**. If you are not wearing the Shroud of Vuh, but you do have the *Speed of Pangara*, you dodge the bolt. If you don't have the shroud or speed, *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, you dodge the bolt. If you are Unlucky, the bolt strikes you. Lose 1d6 STAMINA points. The wizard then holds up a wand and a buzzing red shaft of light emerges from it. The wizard wields it like a sword. You must fight the Elimite wizard Erishum. If you have the Staff of Ashra, it glows with a white light. If you fight him with the Staff of Ashra you will kill him as soon as you win an attack round (stunt damage remains the same).

WIZARD ERISHUM (with wand-sword) SKILL 11 STAMINA 10

If you win, turn to **107**.

173

The hunchback has run into the cave. The red mist has descended and you want to see his vile blood spilt so that he breathes no more. You charge into the cave. Turn to **126**.



174

Your mother is in the dining room, ordering the servants to clear up the mess that both the courtiers and yourself have made. When she sees you, she runs to embrace you. As she does, she cries with joy.

'I am so glad to see you again. I cannot thank you enough for ridding me of those disgusting men,' she says. 'But now you must avenge your father. Search the city, find those responsible and kill them.'

You swear that you will not rest until your father's murderers are dead. Once your house has been cleaned up, you and your mother enjoy a fine meal, and healers tend to your wounds. You feel blessed for ridding your house of a poisonous element. Restore your STAMINA to its *Initial* level and gain 1 LUCK point. Your mother also gives you part of your inheritance – several hundred gold pieces in coins, gems and jewellery. Note that you have 1000 Gold Pieces. You also have a trireme which is moored at the docks, but you must find a new crew as your mother dismissed the old one when your father died. Also, if you lost your spear, you may take a new one (add the spear to your equipment list).

Once you have finished, you set out into the city to find out who killed your father. Where will you enquire first?

The markets?	Turn to **121**.
The docks?	Turn to **81**.
The taverns?	Turn to **59**.
The Wizards' Guild?	Turn to **134**.
The palace?	Turn to **15**.
The temple of Pangara?	Turn to **199**.
The temple of Telak?	Turn to **5**.
The temple of Logaan?	Turn to **137**.
The temple of Ashra?	Turn to **69**.
The temple of Vuh?	Turn to **6**.

175

The red mist descends and you charge at the Elimite. However, you did not notice the pit hidden by an illusion spell which you run straight into. You fall several metres before impaling yourself on many wooden stakes.

176

You flee the cave and its evil inhabitants. Lose 2 LUCK points for your cowardice. You continue to traipse through the mountains for several days of uneventful but exhausting travel. One morning, when the sky is red from the dawn Sun and the first light spreads across the land, you see the shining city of Carsepolis in the distance. You are almost home. Turn to **183**.

177

You return to the centre of Carsepolis in order to continue your investigations. Where would you like to go to now?

The markets?	Turn to **121**.
The docks?	Turn to **81**.
The taverns?	Turn to **59**.
The Wizards' Guild?	Turn to **134**.
The palace?	Turn to **15**.
The temple of Pangara?	Turn to **199**.
The temple of Telak?	Turn to **5**.
The temple of Logaan?	Turn to **137**.
The temple of Ashra?	Turn to **69**.
The temple of Vuh?	Turn to **6**.

178

You throw stones, branches and anything you can find at the apples. *Test your Luck*, adding 4 to the number rolled if you do not have the *Cunning of Logaan*. If you are Unlucky, you get no apples. Turn to **141**.

If you are Lucky, you manage to knock three apples out of the tree. You inspect your prizes. You have found a silver apple of healing (You may eat the silver apple at any time apart from combat. It will restore your STAMINA to its *Initial* level), a bronze apple of prowess (You may eat the bronze apple at any time you are asked if you have the *Strength of Telak* or the *Speed of Pangara* heroic power and continue for that one option as if you have them) and a golden apple of the gods (you may eat this apple to increase your *Initial* LUCK score by 1 and then restore your LUCK score to its new *Initial* level).

You may only use each apple once. Happy with your haul, you move on. Turn to **141**.

179

As you pick up the statuette, you hear a distant laugh. It is a statuette of Logaan, the trickster, and it will bring you good luck. Increase your *Initial* LUCK by 1 and restore your LUCK to that new level. From now on, whenever you *Test your Luck* in a non-combat situation, you do not need to deduct a luck point. Also whenever you win a combat, you may restore 1 LUCK point. Turn to **54**.

180

The talisman glows hot, and you whirl around to see a woman preparing to plunge a dagger into your back. You draw your sword and prepare to fight her. If you have the *Achilles' Heel* flaw and the assassin rolls an 11 or 12 for her Attack Strength and wins the combat round, then she plunges her dagger into your neck, killing you instantly.

ASSASSIN SKILL 11 STAMINA 11

If you win, turn to **73**.

181

The spear seems to be heading right for your neck until the last moment, when some unseen force stops its movement. The spear falls to the ground. Turn to **35**.

182

After several hours of fruitless searching, you are almost ready to give up, but then something catches your eye. It is a plain metal box. The metal has a blue sheen but it sticks out from the other artefacts because it is not decorated. If it were not

for the strange colour of the metal, it would look like any other battered metal box. Cautiously, you open the box. As soon as you do, it seems that the lights dim. There is a dagger inside, made of black steel and surrounded by an aura of evil and darkness. You look upon it for barely a moment before there is a crash and you are engulfed in dust and smoke. When the dust clears, you see that a huge EARTH ELEMENTAL has broken its way through the floor and faces you, ready to crush you under its giant fists. If you do not have an enchanted weapon, turn to **129**. If you do have an enchanted weapon, you face the elemental with it. If you have an enchanted warhammer, it will deal 2 extra points of damage to the earth elemental if you win an attack round (stunt damage remains unchanged) The earth elemental will deal 4 STAMINA points of damage to you if it wins an attack round (stunt-related damage remains unchanged). You must fight it!

EARTH ELEMENTAL	SKILL 12	STAMINA 18

If you win, turn to **53**.

183

You are sitting on a rock, eating the last of your rations when you see movement some distance away. You look in the direction of the movement to see a man in a leather jerkin aiming an arrow at you. He looses it. Before you can move, it hits you in the shoulder. Will you throw your spear at him (turn to **159**), or chase him (turn to **99**)?

184

Before the warrior's body hits the ground, you run up to the sorcerer and plunge your spear into it. The sorcerer collapses into a heap on the ground. Turn to **214**.

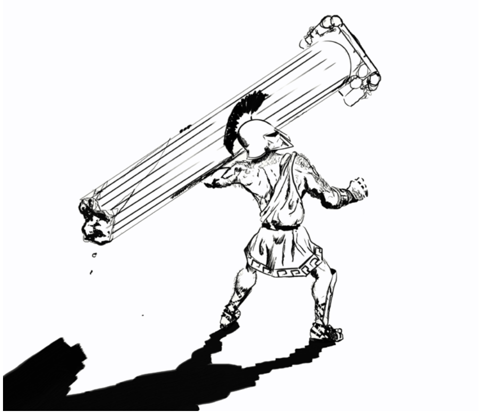
185

You flee as fast as you can from the abomination. Eventually, you reach the sandy beach and catch your breath before you continue your journey. If you have the *Achilles' Heel* weakness, turn to **45**. If not, the rest of your journey is uneventful. You spend several days walking along the coast before you turn off to head inland. Eventually one morning, as the red glow of the dawn casts its light across the land, you see the shining city of Carsepolis in the distance. You are almost home. Turn to **183**.

186

As the feast goes on into the night, you look forward to the dawn of a new age for your family and for the whole of Carsepolis.

Thanks to you, evil has been purged from the city and your father has been restored as rightful ruler of the house. You have established yourself as a courageous and formidable warrior with a bright future. Anything seems possible. You feel as if you could turn back the Caarth singlehandedly. Maybe you will. As the Sun sets on Carsepolis, you think about the glorious days to come and what a brilliant year 1998 will be.



187

The archer fires arrows at you relentlessly. You try to run to the boat to fight him, but you are peppered with arrows and you cannot make it. Eventually, with a dozen arrows sticking out from your body, you collapse at the docks, never to get up again.

188

This magical throwing dagger may be used before combat – it will automatically hit your opponent and deal 2 STAMINA points of damage to them. You may recover the dagger after combat if you did not *Escape*. Turn to **121**.

189

You dash past the zombies in an attempt to get onto higher ground. As you do, the zombies lash out at you. One gets past your guard and claws you (lose 2 STAMINA points). However, you get to higher ground where you can see the zombies shambling up the slope. The undead cannot reach you as you start to kick and throw rocks and boulders down the slope at them. The boulders dislodge more rocks as they roll down, creating a landslide which engulfs the zombies and sweeps them away. You run back down the slope to find the zombies buried under rubble. You stab at a zombie trying to free itself. The cave entrance is still accessible, but the hunchback is nowhere to be seen. If you decide to pursue him into the cave, turn to **126**. If you want to quit this evil place, turn to **176**.

190

You wait for half an hour before an old wizard in dark blue robes appears in the antechamber. However, it is not the guildmaster, nor any senior wizard that you have ever seen. 'Good day, I am Erishum, deputy guildmaster. How may I help you?' You tell him that you have something urgent but only for the guildmaster. 'You may tell me anything you could tell the guildmaster,' says the wizard. When you insist on seeing the guildmaster, he waves his hand with impatience. 'It seems that we are getting nowhere, so I will get you somewhere.' Before you can protest, you find yourself in the city centre. Turn to **177**.

191

You leave the palace, but instead of walking through the gardens to the gate, you skirt around the palace walls. You run straight into a patrol of guards, but when they see who you are and what you are doing, they let you go on your way. 'I never trusted that Ikunum,' mutters one guard. 'His quarters are round the back of the palace on the ground floor.' You thank the guards and continue on your way. When you get to Ikunum's window, you peek inside in case there is anyone in the room. You could climb into the window to see if there is anything you can find. If you have a bat talisman, turn to **180**. If not, turn to **29**.

192

You walk along the sandy beach, admiring the way Hydana's beautiful ocean reflects the red glow of Glatanka's setting Sun on its rolling waves. You stop at dusk for a meal and a quick nap, but you are anxious to return home, save your mother, and destroy this unseen threat to your city. You are walking again within half an hour. As the stars come out, you see rolling storm clouds in the distance. As the night goes on, they draw closer and you can hear the thunder and see the flashes of lightning. The storm hits you when you are atop a cliff, but you march relentlessly on, buffeted by the wind and the stinging rain. Thunder crashes and lightning flashes around you. If you have the *Achilles' Heel* flaw, turn to **76**. Otherwise, turn to **26**.

193

The druid takes you to a young woman in short white robes. 'This is Atalanta, our fastest runner. If you beat her in a footrace, you may continue your journey with our blessing and gifts.'

The populace of the camp gathers round to see your race. The druid waits until all are quiet and you and Atalanta line up. 'Go!' shouts the druid, and Atalanta sprints off at an alarming pace, leaving you desperately trying to keep up with her. If you have the *Speed of Pangara*, turn to **205**. Otherwise, *Test your Skill*, adding 5 to the number rolled. If you succeed, turn to **84**. If you fail, turn to **131**.

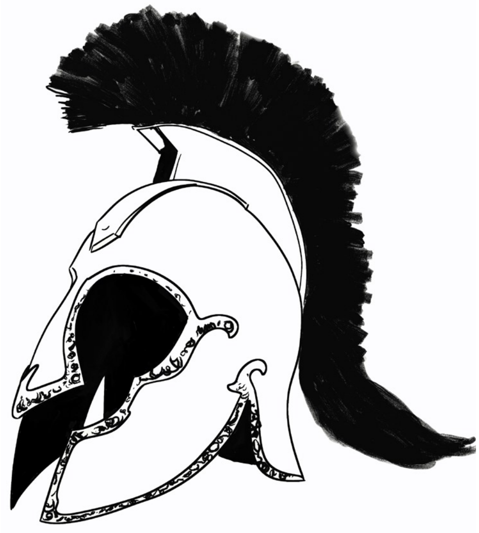
194

The spear flies through the air with speed but you are able to raise your shield to block the blow. Turn to **160**.

195

Careful to avoid the vitriolic liquid, you explore the cave. You may recover your spear if you threw it. The hunchback lived in a large cavern with a stone table in one part, surrounded by rusty surgical implements, vials of yellow liquid and jars of body parts. In another part of the cavern, you find a stinking fur bed, surrounded by mouldy food. You also find a table with all the tools of the alchemist upon it – alembics, round-bottomed flasks, beakers and vials of strange liquids. There are many containers of liquids, but dare you try any of them? If you do not want to indulge in these strange potions, you leave, as there is nothing else for you here. Turn to **148**. If you wish to try them, turn to the paragraph relating to the potion.

A small clay jug of colourless, odourless liquid?	Turn to **97**.
A green bottle containing about a litre of red liquid?	Turn to **28**.
A large clay jug containing a colourless pungent liquid?	Turn to **200**.
A small vial containing a liquid that seems to change colour as you watch it?	Turn to **19**.
A beaker of colourless liquid containing small black spots of another liquid?	Turn to **171**.
A small clay jug containing an oily yellow liquid?	Turn to **80**?
A small vial containing a drop of silver liquid?	Turn to **132**.
A vial of green bubbling liquid?	Turn to **62**.
A clay jug containing a green oily liquid?	Turn to **149**.



196

You remove your jerkin and rub the oil over your arms and chest. As you do, you feel a tingling sensation and you realise that the oil is blessed. From now on, the first hit that you receive in a combat (whether from determining Attack Strengths or from a stunt) will have no effect. Also, if you ever *Test your Luck* in combat to reduce damage, if you are Lucky, you may reduce the damage you receive by 2 instead of 1. Turn to **195**.

197

There is one dose of this healing potion which can be drunk at any time apart from in combat. It will restore your STAMINA to its *Initial* level. Turn to **121**.

198

There are over two dozen zombies, advancing on you slowly. If you have the *Cunning of Logaan* and wish to try something, turn to **189**. If you have the *Speed of Pangara* and wish to run rings around the zombies, turn to **2**.

Otherwise, you will have to either flee (turn to **176**) or fight the horde.

If you decide to fight them, you ready your spear and shield to keep the zombies at bay and to stab at their heads to destroy their brains and immobilise them. The hunchback orders his zombies to destroy you. You stab at the animated corpses, desperately trying to destroy them while they punch, slam and gouge you with their arms and legs. You are outnumbered and cannot fend off every blow from so many opponents, but you fight on anyway. Fight the zombie horde as a single creature. As long as the zombie horde's STAMINA is 16 or more, you must lose 1 STAMINA point at the end of every combat round as you cannot block all of their blows.

ZOMBIE HORDE SKILL 9 STAMINA 25

If you decide to *Escape*, turn to **176**. If you win, you may either pursue the hunchback into the cave in order to eradicate his evil from Titan (turn to **126**), or quit this disgusting place (turn to **176**).

199

The temple of Pangara is a large beautiful building near the docks. Pangara is one of the gods that sailors pray to for a safe journey at sea. You enter to find the temple filled with sailors, worshippers, and priests in grey robes. One of the priests approaches you. 'My lord,' he says 'How might we be of service to you?' If you have the codeword *Perseus* on your *Adventure Sheet*, turn to **32**. Otherwise, you may pay for a blessing that will allow you safe passage at sea. You may pay 50 Gold Pieces. If you do, add the codeword *gust* to your *Adventure Sheet*. Turn to **177**.

200

You take a gulp of the liquid, and it burns as it goes down your throat. You have just drunk fluid used to preserve corpses! You feel the poison coursing through your veins. Lose 6 STAMINA points from the poison. Turn to **195**.

201

You, Platonus and several other wizards pore through books for several hours. Eventually, Platonus finds what he is looking for, but he is not happy. Rather, he is very worried. 'I'm afraid what Erishum stole was the dagger of Elim, a powerful weapon of the Old God of Darkness. If the church of Elim is regaining power, then we are all in grave danger. They will want to see the world returned to chaos and darkness.'

'But where did he go? Do you know that?' you ask.

'Yes,' replies Platonus, 'my scryers have traced the teleport spell. It seems that Erishum is on Fire Island, off the Allansia coast. Maybe they are building a base there. You will have to go there to stop them. I'm afraid our resources will be spent protecting the city and detecting other magical spies, so we cannot help you. You will have to sail there. Good luck.'

Add the codeword *dagger* to your adventure sheet.

You thank the wizards and continue your investigations. Turn to **177**.

202

Test your Luck. If you are Lucky, turn to **50**. If you are unlucky, your fall ends with you being dashed on the rocks below. Your mark in history is nothing but a small red stain on the shoreline.

203

After several hours of fruitless searching, you decide to give up and try other lines of enquiry. Turn to **177**.

204

The druid picks up the amulet by the leather cord holding it and places it around your neck 'This amulet, when worn about the neck, will become hot if someone is sneaking up on you with malicious intent. It will also make you more alert in combat.' Once per combat, you may either increase your Attack Strength by 2 for one round or deal an extra 4 points of damage when you hit an opponent. Turn to **48**.

205

Your swiftness does not leave you far behind Atalanta, but she is still moving away from you. It will require all of your power to stay in this race. If you have the *Strength of Telak*, turn to **48**. Otherwise, *Test your Stamina*, adding 5 to the number rolled. If you succeed, turn to **48**. If you fail, turn to **4**.

206

You charge into the Caarth, sending one flying as you slam into it with your shield. You then face another Caarth in combat.

CAARTH
WARRIOR SKILL 10 STAMINA 12

After two attack rounds, turn to **130**. If you win, turn to **214**.

207

The moment you touch the dagger, you feel nothing. You become one with the great void. Blackness descends as the dagger erases you from life.

208

When you pick up the golden statuette, you feel your tiredness lift and you see your wounds heal. This is a statuette of Throff, goddess of the earth and healing. Increase your *Initial* STAMINA by 2 and restore your STAMINA to that new level. From now on, you may ignore the first hit that you take in combat when an opponent wins an attack round (stunt damage is not affected). Turn to **54**.

209

Your spear is now on a rocky outcrop and it will require some climbing to get to. If you wish to recover your spear, turn to **140**. If you wish to head on as quickly as possible, you can plan to get a new spear in Carsepolis later (cross the spear off your *Adventure Sheet*). Wary of further ambushes, you climb onto higher ground for the final leg of your journey. Turn to **124**.

210

The champion's blow sends you sprawling backwards. Lose 1 STAMINA point. It grins as it advances upon you, brandishing its double-headed sword.

You must now fight the Caarth champion, who will perform a stunt in every combat round as long as its STAMINA is 10 or more. After determining attack strengths, roll 1 die. If you roll a 3~6, the Caarth champion has struck you with its sword and you lose an additional 2 STAMINA points. If you roll a 1 or 2, the Caarth has missed, allowing you to then counterstrike so it loses an additional 2 STAMINA points. You may try your own stunts after the Caarth champion.

CAARTH
CHAMPION SKILL 11 STAMINA 16

If you win, turn to **58**.

211

As you rush at the archer, another arrow strikes you (lose 2 STAMINA points). Will you be able to get to him before he peppers you with arrows? If you have the *Speed of Pangara*, turn to **98**. If you have a polished shield, turn to **135**. If you have neither of these things, turn to **187**.

212

You run into the hut and strike the wizard, who falls over. However, he gets up wielding a wand. A buzzing red shaft of light emerges from it. The wizard wields it like a sword. You must fight the Elimite wizard Erishum. If you have the Staff of Ashra, it glows with a white light. If you fight him with the Staff of Ashra you will kill him as soon as you win an attack round (stunt damage remains the same).

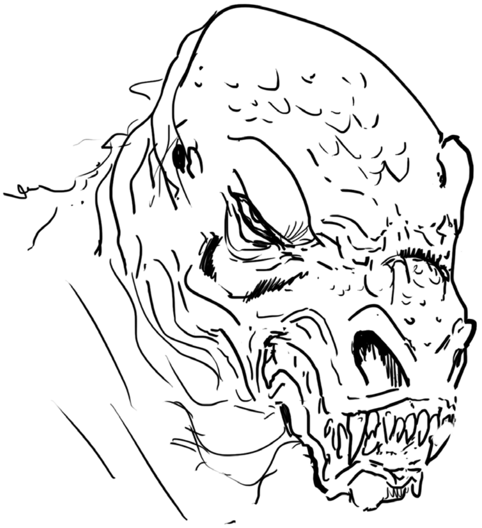
WIZARD
ERISHUM (with
wand-sword) SKILL 11 STAMINA 8

If you win, turn to **107**.

213

You start to walk up the paths of the foothills as the Sun is setting. Mindful of the urgency of your mission, you limit your rest to a mere two hours of sleep in a tree before continuing. The grass gets thinner and the slope gets steeper as you start to climb through the darkness. There is no Moon tonight, so you light a torch to help you see the way. The light does not comfort you; instead it makes you more alert as you are now an obvious target for beasts and bandits. The journey goes well as you scramble along the rocky slopes and climb the steep cliff sides. Then you see the figure. It is several metres away and it looks like a human, standing at the edge of a cave. Then its head turns and you see the rotting flesh of the face with maggots writhing around inside the eye sockets. It is a ZOMBIE. It utters a low moan. As it does, you see at least two dozen zombies shuffle out of the cave. Amongst them, you see a hunchback in robes and carrying a spear. ‘What a fine specimen you are. I think I will take your body and add it to my undead army. You will serve Elim forever.’ With that, he throws his spear at you. It flies with unusual speed and accuracy and hits you before you can do anything. Lose 2 STAMINA points. If you have the *Rage* flaw, the sight of such abominations and the taunts of the hunchback stir you into a berserk desire to purge them from Titan. Turn to **9**.

If you do not have the *Rage* flaw, you may choose to throw your spear at the hunchback (turn to **18**), fight the zombies (turn to **198**), or flee (turn to **176**).



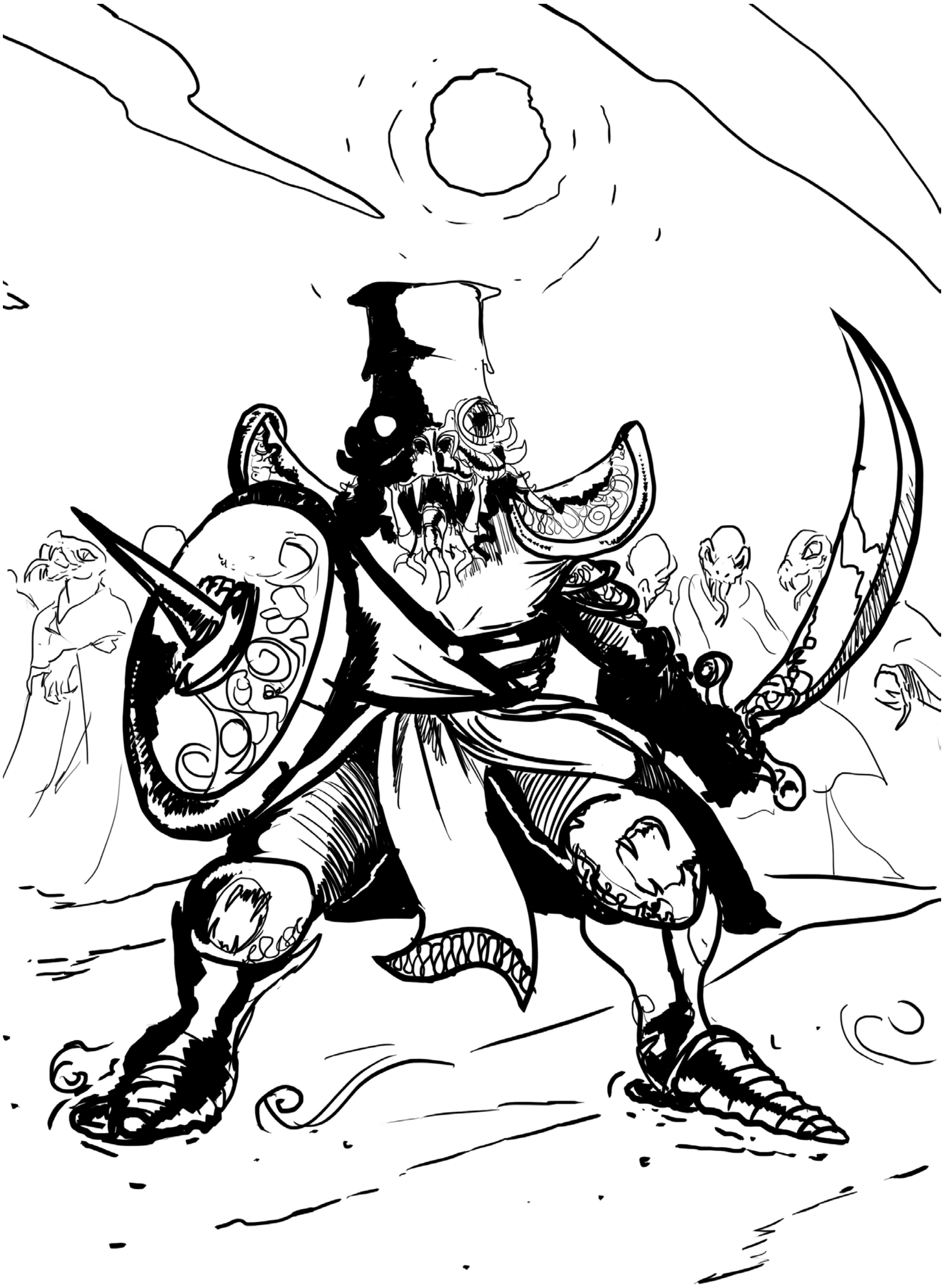
214

There is a deafening scream and the Caarth fall back, leaving only one warrior before your men. This Caarth stands three metres tall, wears no armour and carries a huge sword and shield. It screams for one warrior to face it in single combat.

If you accept the challenge, turn to **55**. If you still have your spear and you wish to hurl it at the champion, turn to **66**. If you take advantage of the distraction and order your men to rush the Caarth, turn to **87**.

215

‘We are always looking for new acolytes, but only those who are close to the gods already.’ If you have the codewords *Heracles*, *Odysseus* or *Perseus*, turn to 43. Otherwise, the priest tells you to come back another time. Turn to **177**.



216

You light your torch and wield it in your combat with the Treeman instead of your sword. The Treeman instinctively shrinks away from the fire but attacks you with its branches despite its fear.

TREEMAN SKILL 9 STAMINA 20

If you *Escape* turn to **37**. If you win, turn to **166**.

217

You cannot see a thing. The warm damp air gradually gets colder but you cannot see why the temperature should decrease. Then you feel something cold on your arm. The cold spreads through your body. In one fluid motion, you pull away from the cold feeling and draw your weapon, lashing out in its direction. You hear an unearthly scream as your weapon connects with the thing. If you have something that can generate light, turn to **165**. Otherwise, turn to **94**.

218

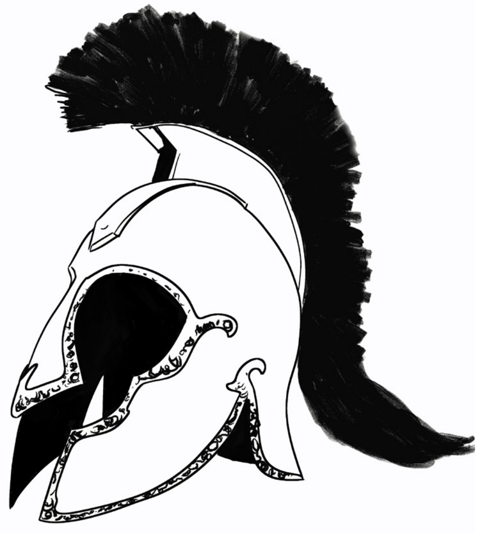
You sprint towards the Caarth warrior, blocking flailing Caarth blows with your shield. You see a Caarth warrior running in your direction, trying to head you off. If you have the *Speed of Pangara*, turn to **89**. If not, you realise that the Caarth is going to head you off before you can attack the sorcerer. If you wish to throw your spear at the sorcerer, turn to **22**. If not, you are mere metres away from the Caarth sorcerer, but the warrior stands before you. Green blood seeps from a gash on its face, but it does not stop its relentless assault.

CAARTH WARRIOR SKILL 10 STAMINA 7

If you defeat the warrior in four attack rounds or fewer (remember that you can use heroic stunts), turn to **184**.

After the end of the fourth attack round, if you are still fighting the warrior, turn to **77**.

If you defeat the warrior in four rounds of combat, turn to **214**.



219

Back at the castle, you are surprised to see Telemechus, your father's bodyguard and family's most trusted servant. He has a look of deep sadness about him.

'My lord,' he says, 'We must speak urgently in private.'

You take him to your quarters where you bid Telemechus to take a seat. You pour him a goblet of wine.

'My lord. I am sorry to be the bearer of such sorry news, but I must tell you that your father died seven days ago. It appears that he died of old age, but as you know your father was a strong and healthy man and a fine warrior up until the day he died. No, we suspect something sinister is at hand. What, however, I don't know. I bring this letter from your mother.' Telemechus offers you a letter sealed with wax bearing your family insignia. Soundlessly, you take it.

My child,

I hope the battle against the forces of darkness fares well. However, I am afraid to say that they are now growing strong within our city as well as without it. I am sorry to tell you that your father is dead, assassinated by a cowardly poisoner. It happened at dinner all very suddenly and I think that it has something to do with the cult that your father was trying to oust from the higher orders of our society. As you know, there are many charismatic and insidious people trying to worm their way into power and influence, but it seems that this particular cult has become very successful even though you killed one of their members. There have been strange and dangerous things afoot with this cult since you left to fight the Caarth. We do not know their agenda, but they spoke of a new age and the return of the great one. Your father was investigating them before he died. I'm afraid that I do not know what he learnt for he would not speak of it to anybody lest the knowledge would put them in danger too. It seems that he was right. Now, merely a week after his death, young courtiers have started to infest this house like hyenas gathered around the corpse of a lion. They irritate me with their constant attention and their demands that I should marry one of them. I bid you to return home to avenge your father and save me from these disgusting leeches.

With love,

Helen, your mother.

You can do nothing for several minutes. When you left home, all was well, and now your father is dead and your house is overrun by opportunistic cowards.

'I must leave tonight. Telemechus, you must stay here and defend the border while I am gone. I will prepare for my journey.' Turn to **38**.

ROGUES' GUIDE
Port Blacksand

Mockup by Alexander Ballingall. Art © John Sibbick, 2013. Used with permission.

Art by ANGELA SALAMALIKI

ALLANSIA'S STOLEN JEWEL – THE INFAMOUS CITY OF THIEVES!

No settlement in Allansia is more well known than that of Port Blacksand, long nicknamed the 'city of thieves'; although some would argue that the town of Fang would give it a run for its money thanks to the yearly Trial of Champions competition.

Blacksand however doesn't rely on such spectacle-filled events for its much-deserved status with travellers. It is a much larger community with an extensive history built primarily on being the premier trading port for the settled lands of northwest Allansia. Its position at the mouth of the Catfish River, and as a port of considerable size, means that the city sports a large variety of people, cultures and trades, making it a vibrant – if often dangerous – place to visit. With the right frame of mind and an eye to personal safety, Blacksand can become an important stop on a travellers visit to Allansia.

HISTORY

The Founding of Cares-Town

Port Blacksand is built on the ruins of the city of Carsepolis. This was founded in 1408OT as Cares-Town by Cares Stormchild, the place beginning as a more permanent settlement for the nomadic people under the command of Stormchild. This initial settlement primarily consisted of a simple wooden bridge across the Catfish River and a stockade to provide a modicum of protection for the fledgling town.

Within the space of a couple of centuries this became a much more defined settlement under the descendants of Stormchild who eventually gave themselves the title of Kings. During this period the simple wooden stockade was replaced by stronger stone walls.

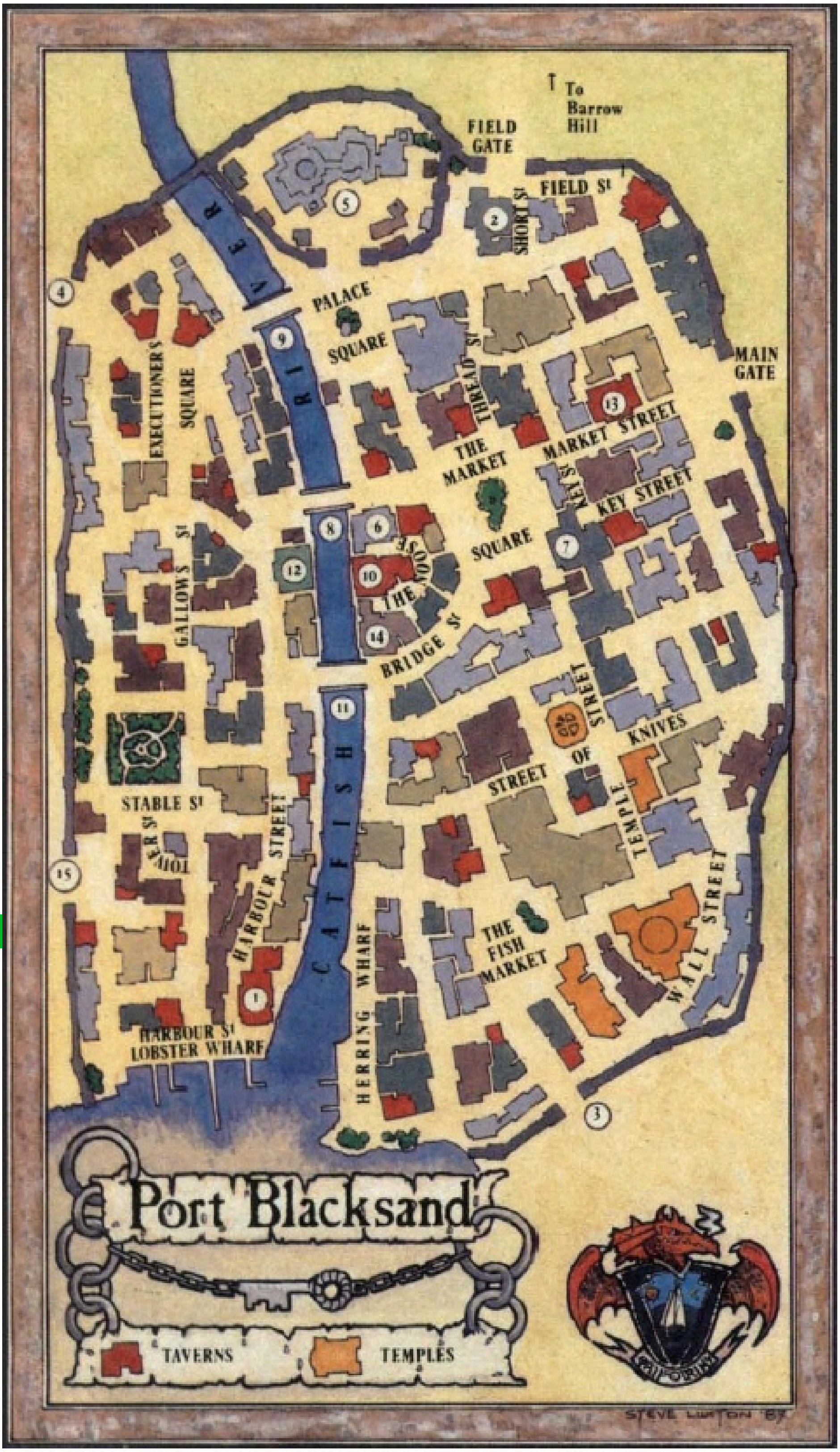
Stewardship

This status quo of rule by Stormchild's descendants remained in place till 1574OT, when the then current ruler, King Cares Whitewolf, died without an heir. His death by poisoning, at the hands of unidentified individuals, took place during a bitter split in the ruling council that advised him and led to a power struggle. The power vaccum led to the evolution of the position of Steward as the ruling figure of the township.

The Dynasty of Swords

Less than 50 years later this post was abolished when Coros Sword-bearer laid claim to being a descendant of Cares Stormchild and took control of the growing city, installing himself as King and renaming the settlement as Carsepolis. His taking of the city on the 15th of Birds Chatter, 1601OT, led to founding of what became known as the Dynasty of Swords, with his descendants ruling the city for almost 400 years.

Several years later the city became acknowledged as the captial of Allansia, evolving into a seat of culture with a successful port, wide streets, and a thriving trade with many parts of the globe.


To Barrow Hill
FIELD GATE
FIELD ST
SHORT ST
PALACE SQUARE
RIVER
MAIN GATE
EXECUTIONERS SQUARE
THREAD ST
THE MARKET SQUARE
MARKET STREET
KEY ST
KEY STREET
GALLOWS ST
THE NOOSE
BRIDGE ST
STREET OF KNIVES
TEMPLE STREET
STABLE ST
HARBOUR STREET
CATFISH RIVER
HERRING WHARF
THE FISH MARKET
WALL STREET
HARBOUR ST
LOBSTER WHARF
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Port Blacksand
TAVERNS
TEMPLES
STEVE LUXTON 87

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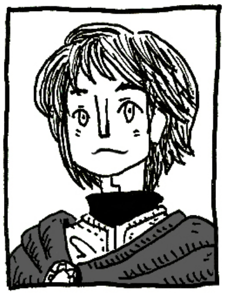
KEY

1: The Black Lobster
2: Brass' House
3: Fisher Gate
4: Gallows Gate
5: Lord Azzur's Palace
6: Madame Star's Cottage
7: Merchant's Guild
8: Middle Bridge
9: Palace Bridge
10: The Beckoning Finger
11: Singing Bridge
12: Sports Arena
13: The Spotted Dog
14: Thieves' Guild
15: Weaver Gate

THE AUTHORS

Alexander Ballingall
Alex is a long time writer of material about getting around Titan and knows all the best routes and contacts should a person been in need of a quick getaway to pastures less... intense.

Ed Jolley
Ed initially worked as a cartographer in northern Allansia, but since becoming more widely travelled, he has changed his focus from maps to the written word, and specialises in drawing his readers' attention to some of the more bizarre and unusual aspects of life on Titan.



Stuart Lloyd
Stuart is a writer much sought after by the city watches of Titan and has discovered many great but well hidden locations amongst the lands he has travelled, mostly because he was trying to hide himself.

S.P. Osborne
Simon claims to know Titan as well as the back of his hand and has even produced an Atlas to back up his claims. This has led to an unfortunate misunderstanding with Orcs of the Clawed Eye tribe, who now wish to chop off his hands in an attempt to find their way at night. He humbly requests that you not reveal his location to them.

Author art by ROBERTSON SONDOH JR.

The Fall of Carsepolis
This was all but undone on the 28th of Unlocking, 1887OT when the city was struck by plague, leading to a decline in status which persisted till 1999OT when the city was destroyed during a crucial battle as part of the War of the Wizards campaign. The survivors were absorbed into the city of Salamonis and the ruins abandoned.

Rising from the Ruins
By 121AC the ruins of Carsepolis were beginning to be used by various pirates and brigands as a safe harbour. Around them a new community formed to service the growing population and number of ships using the old harbour. In 171AC Olaf Twohorse, originally named Eril Shaker, declared himself leader and Prince of what became known as Blacksands Town.

It was under his influence that new walls were built and, later in 192AC, a prison colony founded on Fire Island in order to deal with the number of crimial sentenced under his laws. During this period the city became known as Port Blacksand.

Unsteady Times
However in 201AC Twohorse was deposed and murder by the pirate Daggerface (of whom a statue can still be seen in the Noose District of the city). Daggerface in turn was killed, less than a year later, during a knife fight with fellow pirate Jonjo Ruby. Ruby then died three months later, poisoned by a jealous suitor, and as a result Port Blacksand was plunged into two years of leaderless anarchy.

After a bloody struugle for control between factions within the city, the settlement was attacked in 204AC by Marak Greysteel, a barbarian chieftain. While a formidable fighter and very skilled with a sword, his rule of the city came to an end when he was deposed by Baron Illios Valentis in 211AC.

A merchant by trade, Valentis had turned to piracy to support himself. While a ruthless man, he worked to encourage trade in the city which allowed it to grow in size and prosperity. In 219AC he established the city militia under the command of his brother Drakna Valentis.

Varek Azzur Assumes Power
What signalled Valentis' control of Blacksand coming to an end was the poisoning of his brother. The death of Drakan left the city milita in chaos and unable to respond effectively when on the 17th of Locking, 252AC, the pirate Varek Azzur used an armada of pirate vessels under his command to blockade the port and a force of mercenaries to storm the city walls. The assault was brutal and short, ending in Valentis' capitulation, which was marked by the hanging of his body from the highest tower of the former ruler's palace.

Among Azzur's first acts were to reorganised the militia into the Blacksand City Guard, incorporating a number of Ogres and Trolls into their ranks to help enforce loyalty to the new ruler, and tearing down Valentis' palace in order to construct one of his own.

Port Blacksand Today
Today the city is a veritable hive of activity (some other, less charitable people, might say 'scum and villany'), with a lively trade as valuable cargo (both legal and illegal) comes and goes and travellers from other parts of the globe arrive with their exotic fashions and manners. As such Blacksand remains the most important port for Northern Allansia and there is no shortage of colourful and exotic people, animals, and merchandise filling the city at all hours of the night and day.

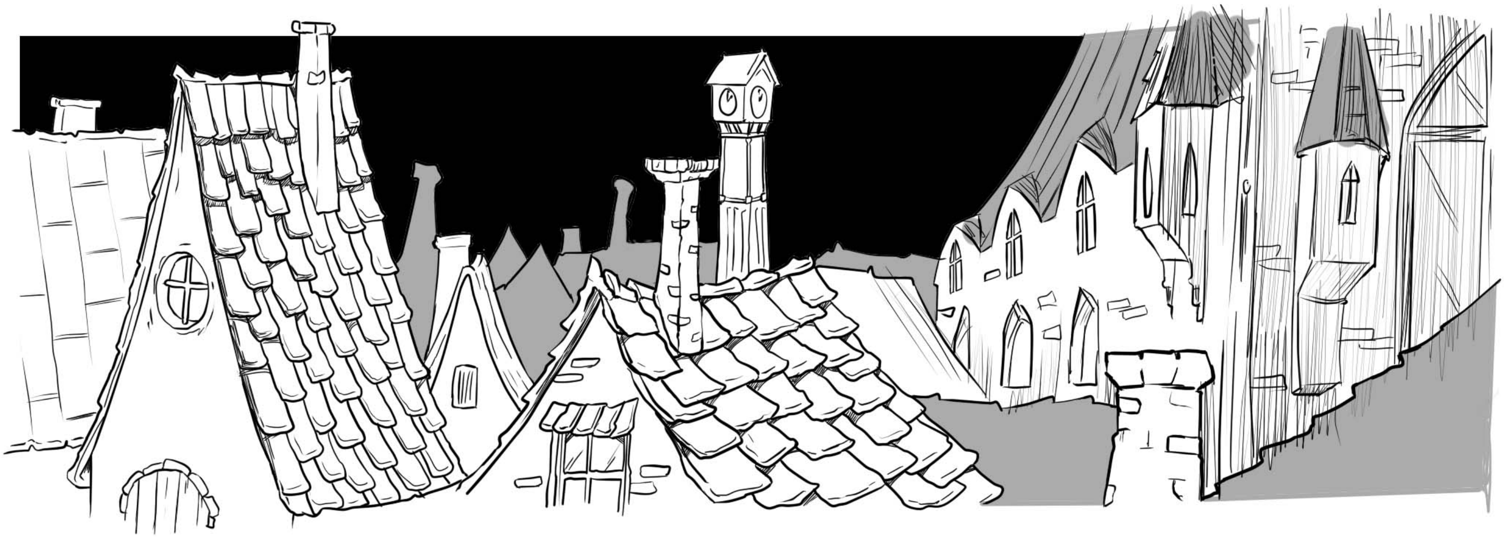
It takes very little effort on the part of a visitor to immerse themselves in a variety of sights and sounds that can bring to mind both the Old World and Khul, let alone the four corners of Allansia. One could also add that there is something new taking place all the time, meaning that a visitor shouldn't become bored with the city. Thus, despite some (significant, some would argue) drawbacks in the areas of personal safety and representative politics, the city is a very cosmopolitan place to visit.

TOURIST INFORMATION

On the subject of personal safety, Blacksand does have a darker side to its nature; a image reinforced by how Azzur's palace looms over the city skyline like a dark and foreboding mountain. Visitors are given to mind themselves and their belongings at all times and, unless totally unavoidable, keep excursions round the city limited to daylight hours for their own safety. Goods, money, pets and small children should not be left unsupervised under any circumstances (unless losing said items is the visitor's goal).

Additionally, a variety of passes are required to move about the city, make use of certain establishments, and to conduct business of any kind. It is strongly suggested that any visitors make sure that all their papers are in order and stored safely about their person at all times. At any moment a visitor could be called upon to display the relevant pass (or passes) for their current activity and the penalties for failing to provide said passes are not much fun.

Blacksand City Guard
Address: Main Gate, Clock Street
Contact Hours: 8 bells through to 20 bells (attempting to gain help outside these hours is not advisable unless you are willing to risk being suddenly dead)
While often a hinderance to many, the guards do serve one useful purpose for any visitors. They are willing, in exchange for the correct sums of money, to issue the requisite passes that any visitor to the city

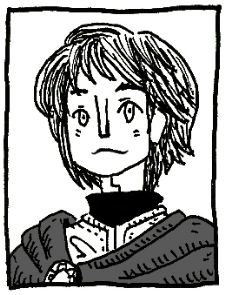


may find themselves in need of.

Office of Varek Azzur
Address: Azzur House, Palace Square
Contact Hours: 13 bells through to 16 bells
This handsome, four-storey office is primarily designed to screen those who would seek an audience with the man in charge of the city. The limited operating hours and forest of paperwork required for obtaining such a meeting are designed to discourage all but the most determined. Please note that completing and filing the paperwork can take upwards of two days, so it is recommended that you obtain passes for camping and the transportation of food, and wait it out in the office foyer on case your paperwork is suddenly lost and needs starting all over again.

SHOPPING

Top 10 Shops and markets



You can buy anything in Blacksand and not just from shops. Just knock on a house door to see if its human, lizardine, or another kind of occupant will offer you something. Be warned, though – merchants in Blacksand are a canny lot and they are prepared for all kinds of haggling strategies from arguing to attempted murder.

The Market Square
Open every day, the market always attracts crowds. As well as being able to purchase a wide range of wares at low prices, you could also get a reading from clairvoyant Madame Star, try to beat a strongman at wrestling or throw a few rotten eggs at the latest criminal who has been put in the stocks for getting caught. Beware. Pickpockets prey on shoppers here.

Ben Borryman, silversmith
The most skilled silversmiths in Allansia, Borryman can make almost any object out of silver, including weapons which many adventurers have found useful.

The Fish Market
If you can stand the smell, then you can buy many varieties of fresh fish from here every day.

Erethrim's Candle Shop
You can buy all manner of coloured and scented candles here. Erethrim even has magical candles, including ones that send you into a world of vivid dreams. Erethrim very kindly shows you these candles for free. His shop is located in the Harbour District where people tend to lose things.

Jimmy Quicktint
To the west of the Garden District, down an alleyway to the north of Weaver Street, are the studios of Jimmy Quicktint—the self-proclaimed 'Best Tattooist in Town'. Jimmy is a larger-than-life character whose arms, hands, feet, and even face are completely covered in colourful tattoos. Jimmy's motto is "Practice what you preach!" Travellers seeking tattoos can often pick a design directly from Jimmy's body, which saves looking through interminable catalogues. His stepbrother next door has a pawnbroker's shop where you can sell items to raise extra funds or you could just look through what is on offer yourself, as adventurers may have sold him valuable and even magical items.

Effie Pipe's Flowers
If you are looking for a pretty gift then some you could do worse than to look in this pleasant establishment. Even if you do not wish to buy a bunch of flowers for someone, you could buy a sentient plant to use as a guard or a golden flower that turns into gold pieces when mixed with wild dog blood.

Harrier's Yard
Open twice a week, this is the place to go if you want to find an animal or even the odd magical creature. Be careful though – animals you buy may not have been trained.

Cut-Throat Alley
If duty tax is getting you down then you can buy many things that you could buy from the shops (and a few things that you couldn't) duty free from here. Open only at night.

Arlob's Emporium
Shoppers who love a challenge should visit this huge pile of multifarious paraphernalia and see how long it takes them to find something they want. Depending on Arlob's mood, you might be able to get your purchases at a bargain.

Sinas Stickle
Shoppers who don't ask questions can visit this resourceful merchant to buy literally anything. He charges a lot, but that's because he has a monopoly on most goods.

HOW TO GET AROUND

Getting around Port Blacksand
Unlike most other cities, where you get around to go to places to do interesting things, getting around in Port Blacksand is one of the interesting things. There's no telling what could be going on in the Streets of the city. You could run into all kinds of things from games of Bays' Ball to grumpy wizards, to Trollish guards to brass golems to novice thieves on their initiation test. Getting around Port Blacksand is a great

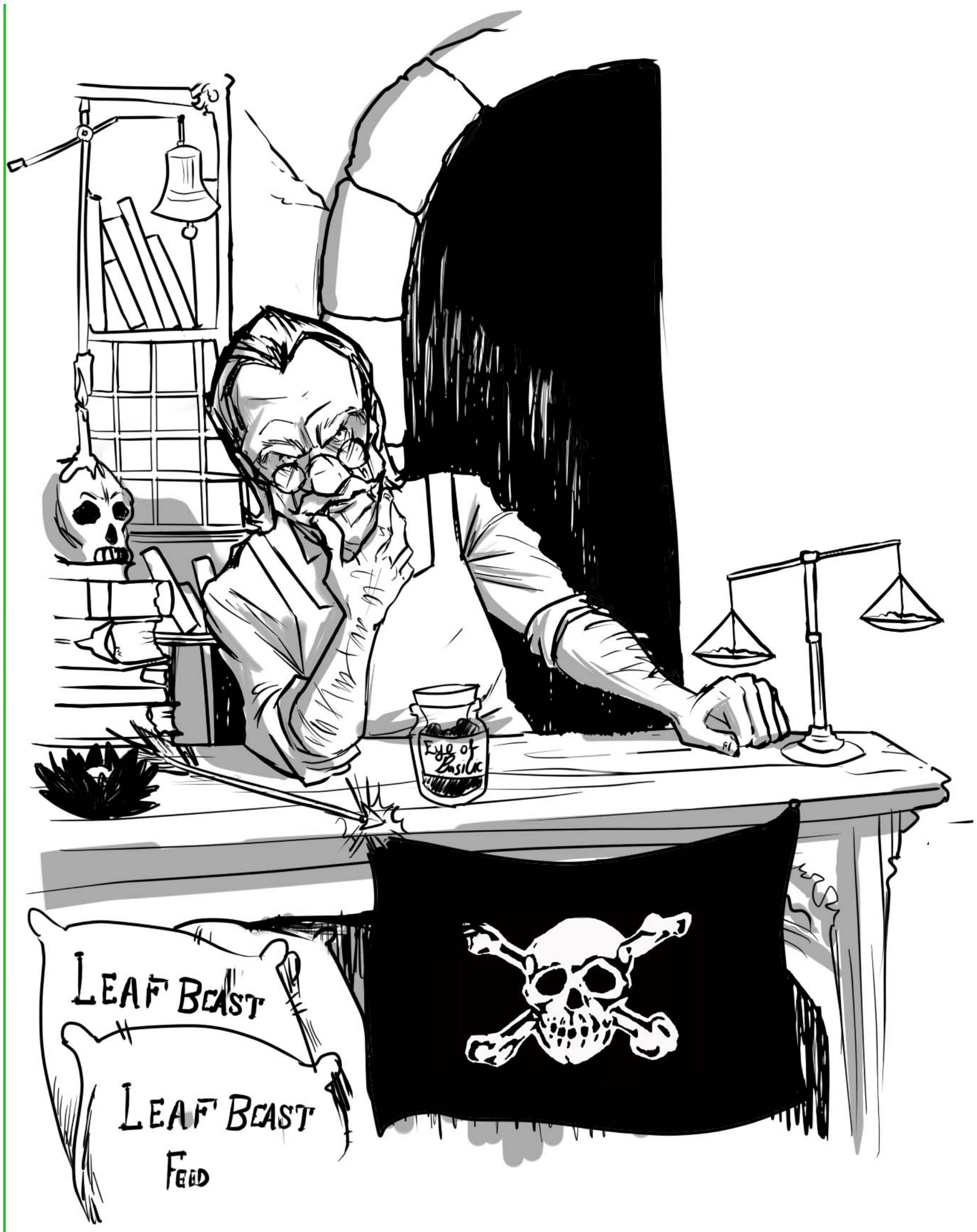
highlight for those of us who are armed to the teeth and have lightning-fast reactions. For the rest of us, however, you can have too much of a good thing, so it is best to just conduct your business as quickly as possible and leave walking the streets for those visitors who have evil sorcerers or dragons to slay (of which there are a surprisingly large number). It is possible to traverse Port Blacksand in a fast, richly decorated, horse-drawn carriage that stops for no one. However, for those of use that aren't Lord Azzur, we have to choose from the remaining options.

Walking
Few cities equal Port Blacksand for street-level stimulation. Getting around on foot is often the most exciting – and perilous – method of exploring. Footwear is important, particularly if you take the mud-choked main roads. During the summer months, nose plugs would also be advisable. Dwarfish visitors will sometimes have their walks spiced up with an occasional swim, though this may only apply to those foolhardy enough to venture into the sewers. To avoid losing your way in Port Blacksand, it would be advisable to buy a reliable map (i.e. buy one from someone outside the city) but do not check it in public as it will attract all kinds of unwanted attention and there may be a map tax in force.

Ferry boats
These are ideal if you do not want to cross one of Blacksand's three bridges or if you want to get somewhere up or downstream. Going on these boats also gives you some opportunities for watching birds as they tear the flesh from the rotting cadavers that float down the river. Ferry boats cost 1 Dragon and ferry pilots always state that they take no responsibility for any accidents that may happen.Whatever that means.

Carriages and sedan chairs
If you are travelling in a group and you do not wish to get your feet muddy, then you could pay a small fee for a carriage. These journeys are faster and less muddy than walking, but comfort is not the carriage's strong point as the cobbled streets make the trip bumpy. A journey costs 2 Dragons and you can hire them for 10 Dragons per day and 50 Dragons per week.

Sedan chairs are 3 Dragons per journey. Sedan chair operators are very knowledgeable about Port Blacksand and know all kinds of interesting places to take you. Sometimes, they insist on taking you down some very exciting alleyways where groups of men are willing to provide you with hours of entertainment by trying to cut you up and stealing your possessions.



WHERE TO STAY

Being a port, Blacksand attracts large numbers of people who are just passing through, and consequently offers a wide range of inns and taverns providing overnight accommodation. The list below is far from exhaustive, as not all our researchers survived their visit to the city, but it does cover the most prominent or noteworthy establishments. Be wary of locals offering to lead you to a cheap place to spend the night: some work for robber gangs, and are looking for gullible tourists to lure into an ambush.

The Black Lobster Inn, Harbour Street
Probably the best-known inn in Blacksand, more on account of its location than its quality. Conveniently situated by Lobster Wharf, it attracts a mixture of pirates and adventurers, and brawls are a common occurrence. Single rooms only, so guests are unlikely to be troubled during the night by anything worse than bedbugs.

The Dragon's Tooth Tavern, Market Square
Another popular haunt for adventurers, centrally located and close to the river. Only reasonable quality, but a good place to pick up gossip from locals and visitors alike. Try to avoid getting drawn into conversation with the landlord, though, as he does tend to go on a bit. Fights between patrons are less frequent than in many local establishments, but do still break out from time to time.

The Hemlock Tavern, Clog Street
Smaller, quieter and better quality than the Black Lobster, but just as close to Lobster Wharf, so it's a good alternative if you're prepared to pay a little extra. For a fee, part of the facilities can be set aside for private meetings.

The Jester Tavern, Wall Street
Caters almost exclusively to thrill-seekers, as rumour has it that the tavern is haunted or cursed. It certainly has a peculiar atmosphere, and the proprietor is not the most congenial of hosts, but there are no reliable reports of guests experiencing anything worse than bad dreams while spending a night there.

The Mermaid Tavern, Weaver Street
Nothing special as a tavern (nor particularly bad, to be fair), but of special interest to adventurers with an interest in ancient Carsepolis, as it has a second exit providing access to the subterranean ruins. The charge for using this exit is not cheap, but could be worth it, depending on what treasures might be found down below.

The Pirate's Ghost Inn, Net Lane
There's no indication that the inn has ever actually been haunted. Indeed, the most horrific aspect of this so-called 'Olde Worlde Sailor's Taverna' is the sheer tackiness of the place. The locals won't enter it, so there's little risk of being robbed or assaulted while staying there, but it's nothing special as an inn.

Varag's Splendid Alehouse, Square Street
Despite the name, the quality of the facilities and ale here is only average. Still, if you're the sort that likes a big fight, this is the place for you. Not a day goes by without at least one brawl, and the owner seems to enjoy the melee as much as his belligerent regulars.

The House of Usrel
Though arguably outside the scope of this guide, the sanctuary provided by the priests of Usrel merits a mention here. Conditions and facilities are far from ideal, but should you find yourself unjustly pursued by the City Guard (for example, following a slight misunderstanding about a researcher's pass), this refuge can be a literal life-saver. It regularly changes its location to reduce the danger of discovery, so there's no point looking for it: if you need a place to hide (and have Usrel's favour), someone from the House will find you.

WHERE TO EAT

Port Blacksand is not exactly renowned for the quality of its eating, at least partly because many visitors find the smell of the city quite stomach-turning. The locals have no problem with that, though, so there are plenty of eating establishments, several of which merit a visit if you stay long enough to get hungry.

The Cat and Crucifix Tavern, Red Hill
Where to avoid if you want to eat, actually, as the needlessly graphic sign hanging outside is enough to put even an Orc off its food. If you enter Blacksand via the Gallows Gate, and plan on dining, keep your eyes at street level until you're past this tavern.

The Drunken Fisherman Inn, Herring Wharf
Unsurprisingly, the kitchen specialises in fish dishes, though it does provide a few alternatives for local fishermen who want a change from what they've been working with all day. Average quality food, and cheap drinks: by mid-evening, the inn's name describes most of its clientele.

The Hog and Frog Inn, Sighing Avenue
The largest inn in the city, in part to accommodate its half-giant proprietor, Doloric Cloudscraper. Inside, it is subdivided into different halls serving different functions, so diners won't be disturbed by gamblers (and vice versa). Fights tend to be put down quickly by

Cloudscraper. Good food, and fine ale from the on-site Cloud brewery (which derives its name from its owner, not the quality of the beer).

The Minotaur Inn, Market Street
The food served here is merely adequate, but the dining experience is enhanced by the fact that the Minotaur is also a theatre, so you can catch a show as well as getting a meal. The programme is limited to populist comedies or melodramas, but there are no truly bad actors in the cast – perhaps because the food sold in the inn is almost as good for throwing as it is for eating.

The Rat and Ferret Tavern, River Street
Visitors are advised to keep a discreet eye on their purses, as the nearby Thieves' Guild provides a significant proportion of its clientele. On the positive side, the tavern has a distinctive atmosphere that can help restore appetites blunted by the city's more unsavoury odours, and the food is good, if a little smoky.

The Silver Coin Tavern, Silversmith's Yard
The highest quality tavern in the city, which is reflected in the prices. Its regular customers are from the highest ranks of Blacksand society (which is no guarantee of honesty, but at least the crooks are classy criminals), and a smart appearance is necessary if you wish to be let in. It is worth the expense and effort, as the drinks and food are excellent.

The Spotted Dog Tavern, Market Street
Not the most hospitable of taverns: on a bad day, the innkeeper may refuse to serve you unless you demonstrate sufficient fighting ability to convince him that it's not in his best interests to displease you. Still, if you're handy with a sword, the Spotted Dog is worth a visit, as the food is pretty good, and quite reasonably priced.

Street vendors
In addition to the food offered in taverns, you can also get something to eat from stalls at the market or by the side of the road. Be warned that the quality of the food offered on the street is highly variable. While tales of visitors to Blacksand being fatally poisoned by roadside snacks are probably exaggerations, the mobility of these vendors means that the bad ones can easily move around to avoid getting a bad reputation, so you buy food from itinerant traders at your own risk.

ENTERTAINMENT

Port Blacksand is renowned Titan-wide for its piratical citizens and streets where danger meets the unwary traveller at every turn. What is less well known is that it is also the centre of culture along the Skull Coast. With its frequent Holy Days, festivals, and pleasant diversions, Port Blacksand

is seeking to change its image into that of a modern, thriving fourth-century city.

In the city's northeast, an enterprising sailor has begun hiring out boats from a landing stage at the bottom of Axeman's Street. Touring the city by means of the wide Catfish River is perhaps the best way to while away a couple of hours, punting along the Catfish and taking in the local atmosphere and colour. Caution must be taken to avoid falling into the river, which has been known to have unfortunate effects on clumsy travellers.

Safer and squarely on dry land, though no less engaging, is the notorious Executioner's Square atop Gallows Hill, not far to the north of this landing stage. Although a steep climb, the trek is worth it for the views over the city, as well as the various gibbets and chopping blocks that stand round the square. Executions take place every few days, so those with strong stomachs can really take in the local customs surrounding death. The best time to visit Gallows Square is during the Year's End celebrations, when the benevolent ruler Lord Azzur will have several prominent Blacksanders executed and donate their riches to the city's poor. Despite the biting cold of the average Blacksand winter, no one goes home unhappy or empty handed.

Fun and excitement can also be had at the Sports Arena, a large stadium in the form of a square surrounded by many tiers of stone seats, north of the river on Candle Street. For those with weak stomachs, it is worth checking ahead as a couple of times a week it plays host to gruesome gladiatorial contests. These exciting spectacles may not be to everyone's tastes, but they really get the blood pumping, and spectators can rest easy that the combatants are usually members of the criminal underworld.

Bays' Ball is the most popular sports in Blacksand, and this is usually played in the arena on days where there is no combat scheduled. In Bays' Ball, a group of brown creatures called Bays try to hit a leather ball with a wooden stick, and then run around some cushions on the floor. It may sound a quaint pastime, but Blacksanders take the game very seriously. As a note of caution, the supporters of each team are now segregated after a number of unfortunate incidents reminiscent of the gladiatorial games occurred in the stands; so when attending a Bays' Ball game, it is important that you cheer for the team supported by those sitting around you.

For those with an eye for the arts, half of The Minotaur Inn on Market Street, to the south of the river, has been converted into Blacksand's most popular theatre. As well as crowd-pleasing adaptations of classics such as Orcs and Orcability and Halfhand, Prince of Lendle, the theatre plays host to public orators and other entertainers. The redoubtable Mr Nibbs of Clock Lane often regales enthralled audiences with his cartography and descriptions of far-off lands, and many a non-Dwarf fondly remembers the one-off appearance of Zark the Violent. The Troll comedian's jokes brought the house down—literally, since the Dwarven members of the audience took offence and started a riot! However, the restoration was of a quality that the axe marks can now barely be seen.

To the north of the Market Square, squirreled away in an area known as The Noose, lives the enigmatic Madame Star. During the day, her tent can be found in Market Square, but those with a mystical bent, and who are seeking privacy along with knowledge, will not want to pass up the chance to visit this friendly prophetess. She will often lay on tea and scones for a mass augury of an evening.

HIGHLIGHTS

Port Blacksand has many more sights and sounds awaiting the curious traveller, some of which are not easily categorised. Travellers who really want to experience everything Blacksand has to offer may find the following locations eye-opening.

Brakbolden's Bathhouse can be found in an alley off Key Street, and is the best way for a weary traveller to wash away the grime of his journey. Inside, one may rub shoulders with commoners and important city personalities while enjoying a bath, massage, or steam treatment under the trained assistance of Brakbolden's helpers.

Market Square lies at the end of Market Street. An open-air market of some sort takes place in the square seven days a week, though its character changes from day to day, which can be confusing to out-of-towners. Traders will display their wares on stalls or trestle tables, while other vendors sell hot food including Blacksand's speciality, Rat-on-a-stick. Various entertainments ranging from exquisite to dubious can be found in the square, including minstrels, poets and actors, and wrestlers and strongmen performing feats of endurance. Other regular acts include dancing bears, fire-eaters, and knife-throwers. Most days, Madame Star the Clairvoyant has a tent in the square where she practises her prognostication. Be aware that brawls are quite common in Market Square, though the increased presence of the City Guard has drastically reduced the number to just one or two per day.

On the north side of Thread Street, to the east of the Market Square, is the salon of the world-famous Talimar the Scalper. An individual's taste in hairstyle is beyond the scope of this humble treatise, though travellers should be aware that rather than enter to avail themselves of Talimar's unique abilities, most Blacksanders engage in the public sport of waiting outside the premises to laugh at the clientele who leave sporting Talimar's idiosyncratic work on their heads.

Just off Wall Street, to the west of the market and deep in the Temple District, is the home of Hister Brey, Port Blacksand's professional Executioner. While he will likely be much too busy with his job to talk to travellers, the front of his house is decorated with the mounted heads of his favourite victims—a sight that truly encapsulates the Blacksand experience.

The Sighing Bridge to the north of the Market Square crosses the mighty Catfish River at some height. Skulls adorn the wooden supports and columns, and the wind makes eerie noises as it blows through them, "like tortured souls crying out for help," according to one commentator. Despite the fanciful nature of the quote, it must be admitted that the sounds must be heard to be believed.

To the north of the river in Blacksand's higher class district lie the municipal gardens, fenced off from the rest of the city. A small donation is required to enter, but it is worth the investment to see one of the finest collections of rare and exotic plants this side of Kallamehr. The topiary is particularly impressive, the shrubs having been cut into such lifelike shapes of animals that they must be seen to be believed. One word of caution to any visitor is not to pick the flowers; doing so is considered a capital offence in Port Blacksand.

Lobster Wharf is at the northwestern limit of Port Blacksand. At the far northern end there stands an immense iron anchor, said to have belonged to a trading galley from ancient Carsepolis. During the day, these docks are a hive of activity, with ships arriving from all corners of the world, bearing exotic goods and notable passengers, enough to make any visitor's head whirl. Of course, Lobster Wharf also affords the fastest and safest way out of the city, though a traveller must take care to voyage with a reputable pirate for their own peace of mind.

Please indicate your acceptance of the mission (Y/N) . . .

The Fact of Fiction

Star Strider

FIGHTING FANTAZINE travels to Sector 3 to uncover a few hither-to unknown facts and in the process earn the title of 'Star Strider'...

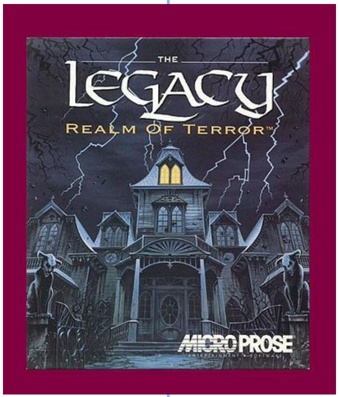
Feature by ALEXANDER BALLINGALL

This adventure holds something of a special place for me, being the first of the science fiction adventures from the series that I played, encountering it the Christmas after it had been first published. Thus it was my introduction to the concept that *Fighting Fantasy* stood for more than just fantasy adventures with monsters. It struck a chord with me at the time and in many ways reflects the changing mood of science fiction film and television.

The book may be littered with things that reflect back on the massive legacy of *Flash Gordon* and *Star Wars*, especially the technology and vehicles, yet at the same time it embraces the dsytopian outlook as spearheaded by films like *Alien* and *Blade Runner*. In fact the idea presented at the start of the story of an Earth that is a shadow of its former glory and where only those humans who can't afford to escape are present, is pretty much a direct steal from *Blade Runner*.

So it is an adventure with a foot in both dominant strands of science fiction and I feel that it does quite well with both. The impetus of a time constraint gave the book an added edge that made things seem much more urgent to that younger version of myself. It may not be to everybody's taste, but *Star Strider* wins my vote for the best of the science fiction adventures!

"The Fact of Fiction" is a series of articles designed to take a deeper look at the information presented in a *Fighting Fantasy* gamebook, whether it be in-jokes, goofs, continuity with other gamebooks, the background to the creation of the book, or similar things. In many ways it is to act like a DVD commentary for the book, telling you things that you might not have already known.

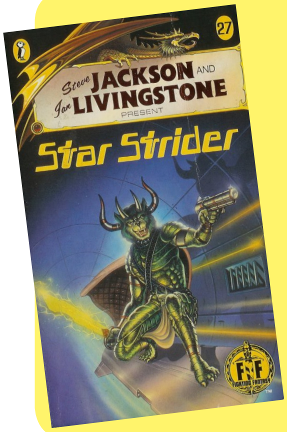


Dedication

❖ The book is dedicted to an Isabelle, who is Ariane Isabelle Bishop (known as Isabelle Bishop). Alkis Alkaviades (see "Further Information") worked with her on *The Legacy: Realm of Terror* (1993), alongside other *Fighting Fantasy* alumni such as Stephen Hand and Jim Bambra (*Dead of Night*, 1989). *The Legacy* was the last release from the 'Magnetic Scrolls' team who had made a name for themselves in the 1980s making text-based adventures as computer games. Isabelle and Alkis were married on June 6th, 1987, shortly after the publication of this very book.

The Mission

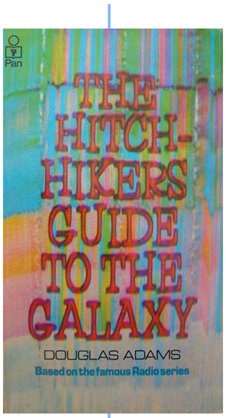
❖ With a title like "Rogue Tracer" it could be construed that writer Alkis Alkiviades was drawing on the film *Blade Runner* (1981) for inspiration. This possible connection is further strengthed by the fact that, like



FURTHER INFORMATION

AUTHOR Luke Sharp
INTERIOR ARTIST Gary Mayes
PUBLISHED May 28 1987
PUBLISHER Puffin
GAMEBOOK NUMBER 27
COVER ARTIST Alan Craddock
AVAILABILITY Out of print.

the film, the book opens with a definition of the protagonist's job title.

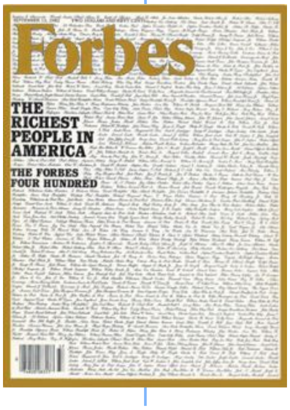

Pan
THE HITCH-HIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY
DOUGLAS ADAMS
Based on the famous Radio series

❖ The definition is taken from the *Encyclopedia Galactica*, a fictional book which first appeared in Issac Asimov's (1920~1992) short story *Foundation* (1942, later republished as *The Encyclopædists*). After that story, Asimov used it in a number of titles from his *Foundation* series and the fictional book was then also used by other writers, most notably by Douglas Adams (1952~2001) in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* radio series (1978) where it is contrasted with the guide of the title (the *Galactica*'s staff being the first against the wall when the revolution comes).

❖ Gromulan is minor corruption of Romulan, an alien species from the television series *Star Trek* (1966~69), where they first appeared in the episode *Balance of Terror* (1966).

❖ The Zand Corporation is a definite borrowing from the RAND Corporation (***R**esearch **AN**d **D**evelopment*), a think tank set up in 1948 by the Douglas Aircraft Company to provide research and analysis to the US armed forces.

❖ The player is said to be from 'Sector 6', while the opening paragraph establishes that Earth is found in 'Sector 3'. It would be interesting to know just how far from Earth the player is meant to have travelled. Indeed, the terms suggest sectors of the Milky Way galaxy, but the prior use of the term 'Galaxy One' in the same section hints that the known universe is much, much larger.



❖ Amusingly, the player is ranked 97th on a table of most wealthy bounty hunters, possibly a borrowing from the *Forbes* magazine (publication began in 1917) annual "Forbes 400" (a list of the top 400 richest Americans) which was first published in 1982.

❖ One can't help but wonder if the "M.I."of the contract refers to *Mission: Impossible*, the television spy series than ran from 1966 to 1973. Hence the danger money "special rates"! A second television series would begin the year following the publication of *Star Strider*, running for two seasons between 1988 and 1990. More recently it has become a film series starring Tom Cruise (b.1962) beginning in 1996.

Villiers de l'Isle-Adam
L'Ève future
Édition d'Alan Raitt
folio classique

❖ The term Android originates from the Greek (ἀνδϱ and εἶδος, meaning "man" and "likeness" respectively), and the earliest recorded appearance in English is in *Cyclopaedia: or, An Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*, an encyclopedia published in 1728 where it is used to describe an alleged automaton. The more modern useage of the term, as a Human-like robot, appears as early as 1886 in Auguste Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's (1838~1889) novel *L'Ève future*.

❖ Androids specifically, as opposed to robots in general, were around in film entertainment of the early-to-mid 1980s are evidenced by the following list of films that involved androids: *Galaxina* (1980), *Android* (1982), *Blade Runner*, *D.A.R.Y.L.* (1985), and *Aliens* (1986). A more recent exploration of androids took place in the reimagined version of the television series *Battlestar Galactica* (2004~09).

❖ Alphacent is the first example of author attempting to pepper his future tale with some form of futuristic dialogue that gives flavour to the adventure (a non-*Fighting Fantasy* example would be Gaff's "cityspeak", again drawing from the film *Blade Runner*). Working with the idea that language will continue to drift and change over time (such as the word "pax" (Latin for peace) used in the childrens game of Tag becoming corrupted to the basically nonsense word "pags"), here Alkiviades has Alphacent as a contraction of Alpha Centauri.

❖ Alpha Centauri (α Centauri) is a binary star system (two suns around a common center of mass, in this case "α Centauri A" and "α Centauri B") generally regarded by many as the closest neighbouring system to Earth at 4.37 light years (although that title is actually held by Proxima Centauri (also known on ocassion as "α Centauri C"), a red dwarf star assumed to be gravitationally related to Alpha Centauri). As Alpha Centauri is seen as the closest star to Earth, it has often featured in speculative fiction as the natural first destination of Humans venturing out of our own solar system.

❖ In the incidental art on page 11 there is a sign on the side of the vehicle advertising "Coke". This is presuambly a reference to the drink Coca-Cola which was first made available in 1886 (the nickname became a trademark in 1944), although the lack of the distinctive cursive script logo keeps things ambiguous and somewhat generic.

Likely Enemies

❖ Wooki is an obvious steal from the Wookiees, represented by the character of Chewbacca (played by Peter Mayhew (b.1944)) in the *Star Wars* films beginning

■ The adventure placed 65th (out of 70) in the Fighting Fantazine 2010 survey of fan opinion, scoring a total of 52.3%. ▸

A BRAND NEW BUMPER FIGHTING FANTASY MINI ADVENTURE: CAN YOU PROVE YOUR WORTH IN BONES OF THE BANISHED
ISSUE 5 FEBRUARY 2011
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THE FIGHTING FANTASY FAN MAGAZINE
TYRANNOSAURUS REX!
JOHN HIBBICK
SURVEY RESULTS SPECIAL!
A NEW LEASE OF LIFE
GRAHAM BOTTLEY

■ As previously established, in "The Fact of Fiction" in issue 3 (2010) for *Daggers of Darkness*, Luke Sharp is a pseudonym for Alkis Alkiviades, who was born on January 13th, 1953 in Nicosia, Cyprus. ▸

■ Ignoring the person-from-Titan-in-the-multiverse of *Spectral Stalkers*, this book proved to be the second-to-last straight science fiction adventure produced by the range.

■ This book marked the third and final outing of Gary Mayes as an internal illustrator for the series, his depature from the series possibly a by-product of the previously mentioned reduction in science fiction adventures. Mayes' two previous titles had, after all, been *Rebel Planet* (Robin Wakefield, 1985) and *Robot Commando* (Steve Jackson*, 1986).

*The US-based author.

with *Star Wars* in 1977. The note that Gromulans are cunning enough to talk the three hind legs off of a Wooki is perhaps a reference to *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* where The Great Hyperlobic Omni-Cognate Neutron Wrangler can talk all four legs off an Arcturan MegaDonkey.

❖ Ferian is an Old English (mid-5th Century~mid-12th Century) word which means to take or to carry.

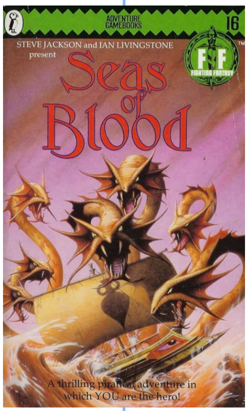
❖ For Houlgans, see the box out on page 72.

Abilities

❖ Notably, the instructions do not feature the usual instruction that the various stats, like SKILL, can not go above the player's *Initial* scores. This seems to be intentional as otherwise the choice to consume food cubes in the first paragraph, and thus gain 1 STAMINA point, seems pointless.

❖ For the first time since Steve Jackson's *House of Hell* (1984), the stat of FEAR makes an appearance. Unlike the previous use of the stat, the player's score does not change throughout the adventure.

Time


ADVENTURE GAMEBOOKS
16
STEVE JACKSON and IAN LIVINGSTONE present
FF FIGHTING FANTASY
Seas of Blood
A thrilling piratical adventure in which YOU are the hero!

❖ The idea of having the player track time spent returns, having been first featured in *Seas of Blood* (Andrew Chapman, 1985). Here, instead of marking days, the player has 48 TIME units (established in "The Mission" section as 'gravity hours' – with the minor illustration on this page (p.18) featuring a clock at 8:12 and the letters 'GH' which presumably stand for gravity hours) which mark how long remains until the President can no longer resist the brainscan. One would be tempted to equate the 48 TIME units with 48 of our hours (or two days), but the way time passes in the game doesn't equate easily with this. Additionally, the game doesn't treat the same activity with consistent TIME penalties, with sleeping, for example costing units at (228) and (386), but not at (45), (239), or (245).

Combat

❖ A variation on the One-Strike Combat of *Creature of Havoc* (Steve Jackson, 1986) appears. This is limited to androids only, with a roll of double 6 meaning the player has managed to strike the 'weak spot' of the android and instantly disabled it. Further variations would latter appear in *Chasms of Malice* (also by Alkiviades as Luke Sharp, 1987) and *Slaves of the Abyss* (Paul Mason & Steve Williams, 1988).

1

The hero obtains a ticket to Earth and settles down in a seat for the trip there.

❖ Oberon is a borrowed from the king of the fairies, the most well known version of the character coming from William Shakespeare's (1564~1616) *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (written at some point between 1590 and 1596).

❖ Plexi-glass here is a reference to Plexiglas, a product developed in 1928 and first brought to market as trademarked product by Rohm and Haas Company in 1933. It has had various names over the years, the most recognisable being perspex, with the chemical name of Poly(methyl methacrylate) or PMMA for short. It was developed as a lightweight, shatter-resistant alternative to glass.

❖ The appearance of a MegaCorp Android on the shuttle headed to Earth suggests that there is at least a rival to the Gromulans in the manufacturing of Androids in this fictional universe.

❖ MegaCorp is easily identifiable as a contraction of "megacorporation", a term reasonably synonomous with "multinational" for describing corporations that has operations in more than one country. The science fiction genre tends to feature such "megacorporations" with regularity, an example being Weyland-Yutani of the *Alien* films (starting in 1979) who are ruthless in their attempts to weaponise the alien creature. Others include Omni Consumer Products of the *RoboCop* films (the first in 1987 and a remake currently planned for 2014), and the Umbrella Corporation of the *Resident Evil* video games (the first in 1996).

3

Walking along a trench the hero can hear the sound of machinery.

❖ Roma, here an alternate name for Rome, comes from one of the myths involving the founding of Rome, in which Prince Aeneas leds a group of Trojans to found a new Troy in the aftermath of the Trojan War. Shortly after arriving at the Tiber river, the men of the group wish to leave again but the women do not. One among them, named Roma, encouraged the women to set fire to the boats so as to force the men to settle there.

❖ While all ancient texts agreed that Rome was founded on April 21st, the sacred festival day dedicated to the goddess of shepherds, Pales, the same texts offer a variety of founding years, stretching from 753BC through to 728BC. Modern archaeological evidence currently puts the foundation of the oldest fortification walls to around about the middle of the 8th Century BC.

FUTURE TECH

As pointed out in the main article, with terms like "Alphacent" *Star Strider* tries to give some flavour to the futuristic world it presents to the reader. What follows here then is a quick guide to some of the technological devices that appear on the Earth of tomorrow...

CATCHMAN ("Weapons") and PLASTI-NET (15)

Clearly we aren't quite in *Blade Runner* territory (see "The Mission") as the player doesn't go about 'retiring' criminals in the fashion Deckard does in the movie. Instead, the Catchman device works like a futuristic version of a net gun crossed with Spider-Man's ability to shoot webs (plastic in this case as opposed to the nylon of Spider-Man) that can capture people (*Spider-Man*, *Amazing Fantasy* 15, 1962).

AMAZING FANTASY
12¢
15
SPIDER MAN

CEPHALOPROTECTOR ("The Mission")

A fancy way of saying "head protector" (from the Greek *kephale* (κεφαλῆ) for head), but like in most science fiction works was probably used to sound more futuristic. Given the depiction of Preseident Xerin in the illustration for paragraph 278 shows him with no attachments *on* his head bar the Gromulan brainscanner, one has to assume that the cephaloprotector is *inside* his head.

CHRONOGRAPH (16)

At first glance this appears to be more of the same (see above), with a chronograph being a fancy term for what most people would call a clock. Indeed, this appears to be how Alkiviades uses the term in the adventure as the chronograph seems to function as no more than a watch. However, chronograph is a term used to label a device that has a distinct difference in function to that of a clock. While a clock simply keeps time, a chronograph combines a stopwatch with a regular clock, with usually most basic versions including a separate sweep second hand.

❖ The first chronograph was invented by Nicolas Mathieu Rieussec (1781~1866) in 1821 for King Louis XVIII of France (1755~1824) who as an avid watcher of horse races and wanted to know just how fast the races were.

❖ In keeping with celphaloprotector, this term has Greek origins as well with *chrónos* (χρόνος) simply meaning "time" and verb *graphō* (γράφω) or "I write". This is important because the earliest chronographs could be written upon, with a small pen attached to the index. When set in motion, the length of the pen mark would indicate how much time had passed.

COMTERM (20)
Combining "communication" and "terminal". These ComTerms appear in the context of the adventure to be a combination of computer interface and videophone.
❖ Videophones were first proposed only a couple of years after the advent of the telephone in 1876, although it would not be until 1936 that any useable system was deployed. This German system, available in public booths of two per city, could be found in Berlin, Leipzig, Hamburg, Nuremberg, and Munich. While plans were made to expand the system, they were scrapped with start of the Second World War in 1939 and the system itself was discontinued in 1940. The US attempt followed in 1964 with the AT&T Picturephone that had booths in New York, Washington DC, and Chicago. However, at a staggering cost of between US$16 and $27 for a three minute call (between US$118 and $200, inflation adjusted to 2012) and a need to reserve a call time in the booths, the system saw limited appeal with the public and closed in 1968. As a result, until the advent of broadband internet connections that allowed for cheaper and higher quality video calls (most proposed videophone system up into the 1980s were black and white in picture quality), the videophone remained in the domain of fiction. There it has most notably been seen in action in films such as *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) and *Back to the Future Part II* (1989).

CRINKLETRON ("Abilities")
There is no clue given in the text to explain what this device is, apart from the facts that it is powered by phozon crystals (see below) and that it can continue operating forever if powered by such means. The suffix "-tron" is from Ancient Greek (τρον) and is used to denote an instrument of some kind.

EXCEL and
GROMPOL (both "Likely Enemies")
Both are types of android (see "The Mission"), with GromPol clearly a contraction of "Gromulan Police" which fits with how they behave in the adventure. The Excel androids, described as 'very dangerous', obviously get their name from the word *excel*, meaning to surpass (other androids presumably).

FOOD CUBES (1)
A cheap and not-very-cheerful form of food served at various places on Earth in the adventure. These are presumably based on the food cubes developed by the Pillsbury Company for NASA's space program, being first consumed by astronaut Scott Carpenter (b.1925) onboard the *Aurora 7* in 1962.

FORKLIFTRON (7) and
SWEEPERTRON ("Likely Enemies")
Simply a forklift and a street sweeper respectively, with the futuristic suffix of "tron" added (see "Crinkletron" above).

ILLUS-O-VISION 70 and
ILLUS-O-SCOPE (both "The Mission")
The first seems to be a form of 3D television. We learn in "The Mission" section that it had been developed by the Gromulans for the Galaxy Ents Corporation, who then stole the copyright from them (see paragraph 1 for more on evil corporations in science fiction).
❖ The second is a portable version of the first and appears to be akin to how the hologram of Arnold Rimmer works in the television series *Red Dwarf* (1988~present), presenting lifelike images in three dimensions. These we learn elsewhere can be affected (as can the Gromulan androids) by a faulty acidity regulator.

JUKE (59)
A juke is clearly the futuristic equivalent of a jukebox. Jukeboxes arrived in the 1890s, with the first automatic, selective version appearing in 1927. As they developed in sophistication and number of records held, they acquired the term 'jukebox' in the 1940s. The word comes from 'juke joint', which was slang name for a music establishment where people could dance, drink, and gamble. 'Juke' is believed to have come from the Gullah (an African-American ethnic grouping) word *joog* which means "rowdy or disorderly". In 1950 a jukebox featuring only 45", vinyl records was introduced, which set the standard for the next three decades. The advent of personal music players beginning with the Sony Walkman (1979) led to the decline in jukebox popularity, although they still have an image today as part of popular culture.

LASERPEN and
VIDCORDER (both 68)
The second item sounds like a contraction of "video recorder", but combined with the first object, the laserpen, it suggests something more interactive like a tablet with a stylus for input. While video recorders have been in existence since 1956 (with the Ampex VRX-1000 aimed at commerical television broadcasters) and 1963 for the first examples of home recorders, the tablet has had a more tortured history. The earliest example of a what generously fits the definition of a tablet computer was the Telautograph of 1888. Handwriting recognition arrived in the 1950s with the Styalator, followed by the RAND Tablet (see "The Mission") in the 1960s. Development then followed through the 70s, 80s, 90s and first decade of the 21st Century. It wasn't till the release of the first iPad in 2010 that tablet computing became mainstream. As with the previously mentioned videophone (see "Conterm"), a form of tablet, the fictional IBM NewsPad, featured in the film *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

NEUTRONSWORD and
STARBLASTERS (both "Weapons")
Both weapons here are variations on standard science fiction stock imagery of energy swords and ray guns. Energy swords appear often in literature, in such works as *Gather Darkness* (1943) by Fritz Leiber (1910~1922) and *Ringworld* (1970) by Larry Niven (b.1938), while arguably the most famous version is the lightsaber of the various *Star Wars* films (1977~). The earliest fictional version of a ray gun could be considered to be the Martian Heat-Ray of *The War of the Worlds* (1898) by H.G. Wells (1866~1946).

PHOZON ("The Mission")
Phozon crystals are probably a creation of Alkiviades', but surprisingly there exists a Namco arcade game *Phozon* (フォゾン) that was released in 1983 that involves the player moving a black atom called a Chemic about the screen in order to attach to passing Moleks. Doing so with the correct Moleks allows the player to replicate the chemical shape in the center of the screen. Why is it unlikely that Alkiviades knew of this game? Probably because it was only ever available in Japan until it was released on *Namco Museum 3* for the PlayStation in 1996. We later learn from the "Abilites" section that phozon crystals are used as power source, but for some unidentified reason they do not fuction within Earth's solar system.

ROCKET BIKES (19) and
ZIPCAR (15)
More fantastic science fiction imagery in the form of motorbikes and cars that can fly. Sadly, despite the various promises of science fiction across different media, such flying vehicles are yet to exist as an everyday object. Various attempts have been made over the years to develope flying cars, but those that have eventuated are restricted to take off and landing at designated airports and don't reflect the fly-anywhere approach of films such as *Back to the Future Part II* and *Blade Runner*, both depicting such technology in existence in 2015 and 2019 respectively.

HOULGANS

A corruption of the term "hooligan", a word which has its origins in the 19th Century. To begin with it was used in the 1890s to describe a London street gang, but by the turn of the century is was used as a genric term to describe acts of violence and vandalism. An early example of this useage appears in the Sherlock Holmes story *The Adventure of the Six Napoleons* (1904) by Arthur Conan Doyle (1859~1930).

❖ Linked with hooliganism, the tribes featured here are all based on the supporters of five football teams. Football hooliganism can be traced back as far as the 14th Century when in 1314, King Edward II (1284~1327; reigned 1307~1327) banned football due to the disorder around matches. Incidents in England in particular had risen to an average of 25 events a year by the 1960s and was considered to be out of control by the 1980s (even being nicknamed the "English Disease"), leading to the government of the day cracking down on the disruptive behaviour.

❖ The five groups of team supporters named here that have "devolved", both in name and purpose, are (with club shields in order starting at the top left) R'al (Real Madrid CF), Juve (Juventus FC), Stienn (AS Saint-Étienne), L'pool (Liverpool FC), and G'ners (Arsenal FC).

❖ Real Madrid CF was founded in Madrid, Spain in 1902 as Madrid Football Club, gaining the crown on its emblem and the title real (*royal* in Spanish) in 1920 when they were bestowed by King Alfonso XIII (1886~1941; reigned 1886~1931). Juventus FC was founded earlier in Turin, Italy in 1897 as Sports Club Juventus and was the first professional sports club in Italy. AS Saint-Étienne was founded in Saint-Étienne, France in 1919 by employees of of the Saint-Étienne-based grocery store chain Groupe Casino and was originally called Amicale des Employés de la Société des Magasins Casino (ASC). Liverpool FC meanwhile was founded in Liverpool, England in 1892 and their team anthem, "You'll Never Walk Alone", comes from the 1945 Rogers & Hammerstein musical *Carousel*. Lastly, Arsenal FC was founded in London, England in 1886 as Dial Square by employees of the Royal Arsenal in Woolwich, London.

❖ Why these five teams? Real Madrid CF had won their league (La Liga) for the 1985~86 season and they also won the 1985 and 1986 UEFA Cups. Juventus FC won their league (Serie A) for the 1985~86 season and also won the 1985 European Cup. AS Saint-Étienne wasn't a strong team in the 1980s, but had had success in the 1970s as champions of their league (Ligue 1). Liverpool FC were in the middle of a long run of wins, winning their league (Football League First Division) in 1980, 1982, 1983, 1986 and would go on to win it in 1988 and 1990. They also won the European Cup in 1981 and 1984. Arsenal FC, like Saint-Étienne, wasn't winning titles in the early-to-mid 1980s, but would soon win the First Division in 1989.

❖ What is Alkiviades' interest in all this football tribalism? Well his Facebook page indicates that his is a supporter of Arsenal FC. He joins fellow notable supporters Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Harry, Demi Moore, Keanu Reeves, Dido, John Lydon, Jeremy Beadle, and Clive Anderson, among many others.

9
The hero fights against the power of an Illus-o-Scope to steal the Lurgan ship.

❖ Lurgan is some species of alien in this adventure, but it is also a town in Northern Ireland (in County Armagh). The names comes from the Irish *an Lorgain* which means a "shin-shaped hill". After we to perhaps infer that these aliens resemble shins in some manner?

10
On a terminal the hero can see the President being held prisoner.

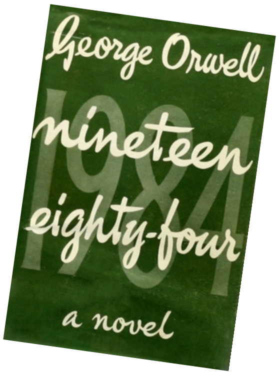
❖ The artwork here does slightly betray the period in which it was done. The terminal the player uses at this point the focus of the main illustration and closely resembles a portable TV and VCR, complete with a chunky remote set before them. The examples shown here (right), and all are from the 1980s, are the Rhapsody portable TV, a Grundig VHS VCR, and the remote control for a different model of Grundig VCR.

Rhapsody
UHF
1 39
CA 55
VHS
VS 200 RC
GRUNDIG
MIX
CANCEL
TV MIX
PAGE
1/2 PAGE
REVEAL
HOLD
INDEX
TT/TV
TIME

16
The hero defeats the Gigantian and makes an attempt to escape.

❖ Gigantians we learn come from Gigantis 8, which is surely an English name given to the species based on their physical size rather than what they call themselves.

❖ We also learn elsewhere that they can fire a Korwellian death bolt from their mouths. Is Alkiviades picking a term similar in sound to 'Orwellian', from writer George Orwell (1903~1950), author of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), in order to evoke that imagery? Certainly the Earth as protrayed in *Star Strider* is a fairly oppressive place with the Gromulans seemingly firmly in control as a single party state, alongside which operate Gromulan androids that can easily turn you over to the law enforcement system, and quite a bit of video surveillance.



22
The hero heads to Madrid on a Silverhound.

❖ Silverhound is clearly a reference to the transportation company Greyhound Lines that runs various intercity bus routes in the United States. Founded in 1914 by

Carl Wickman (1887~1954) and by 1915 was known as the Mesaba Transportation Company, the company would eventually become the most prominent bus service in America.

❖ Luxurus is presumably, like Gigantis 8, an English name for the planet, given the name is rooted in the word ‘luxury’. Pleasure planets are a staple of the science fiction genre (leaving one to wonder if Alkiviades is having a go at the cliché with mention of the reps dirty stories), with examples including Ursa Minor Beta from *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*, the various combined *Star Trek* series, which have featured at least three such planets like Rubicun III (from *Justice* (1987), an episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987~93)), and the film *Andromina: The Pleasure Planet* (1999).

31

Coming across an antiques shop, the hero spots some floppies in the window.

❖ Floppies, or floppy disk, were first developed by IBM and made available commercially in 1971 (with 80 kilobytes (KB) of memory). They were originally a large 8” disk and read-only. The following year read/write disks were created at 175KB, with double-sided disks in 1976 of 500KB and then later 1~1.2MB. However the 8” size was deemed impractical for creating computers to be used for word processing, leading to Wang Laboratories to create a 5 ¼” format in 1976. This was released intially with a memory of 98.5KB which had reached 360KB by 1978 and then 1.2MB by 1984. In 1982 the Microfloppy Industry Committee (a consortium of 23 media companies) agreed on a smaller 3.5” disk size, which lead to a large number of competing disk types. Eventually, with the adoption of a Sony-based design standard, 3.5” disk drives arrived in Apple computers (1984), and then others like Atari and Commodore (1985). Starting with 400KB at their introduction, by 1987 they had a capacity of 1.44MB and 1988 3.5” disks outsold the 5 ¼” versions for the first time. This standard remained in place for the rest of the floppies lifespan. In the early~mid 1990s CD-ROMs began to replace floppies as a means of selling software. Apple removed the 3.5” drive from their computers in 1998, although even in 2002 most PCs still had such a drive. The legacy of the floppies currently lives on in some software, like Microsoft Office 2010, where an image of a 3.5” disk is still used to represent saving a file. The picture below shows (from left to right) the 8”, the 5 ¼”, and the 3.5” disks.

EC5274 SS/SD
СДЕЛАНО В БОЛГАРИЯ
boedem
FLOPPY DISK
5.25" HD,DS
WRITE ENABLE
WRITE PROTECT

43

The hero meets an undercover android known as Gus.

❖ The android being a GUS (Genus Undercover and Subterfuge) is similar to the undercover SuperVoc D84 from the Tom Baker *Doctor Who* adventure *The Robots of Death* (1977), which had been released on home video for the first time in 1986.

45

At the Roma terminal the hero checks into a Fast Food and Sleep Unit.

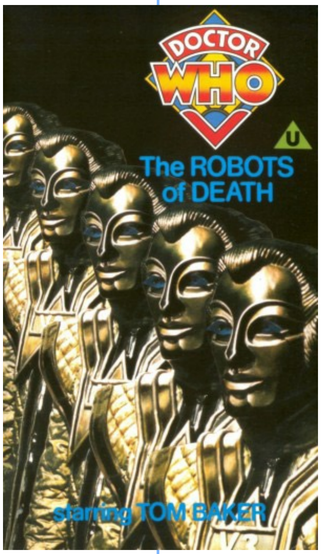
❖ Virwat-duck is an odd item. *Virwat* is an Afrikaans alternative for the Dutch *waarvoor*, which, depending on context can mean either “which” or “what ... for”.

59

The hero heads to ‘Dino’s Club’ where a fight begins.

❖ Mangola is a mango flavoured soft drink popular in India. Originally launched by Duke and Sons in the 1950s to rival Coca-Cola (see “The Mission”), the company’s range of drinks (including Mangola) were purchased by PepsiCo Inc. in 1994.

❖ Orvium is a promontory feature of the coast of what is modern Portugal, as identified in Book II, Chapter 5 of *Geography* by Ptolemy (c.90~c.168), which was a compilation of what was known of the world’s geogrpahy in the Roman Empire of the 2nd Century. While the first of the two books was an explanation of the methods used for the mapping, the second book consisted of maps and co-ordinates. Sadly the original maps have not survived transmission through the ages, with new maps being added at some point during the medieval period (the oldest copy with maps comes from the 13th Century).



61

❖ Felina is a name derived from the Latin, being the feminine of Felino. This in turn arises from the term *felinus* which means “cat”. Other cat references in *Star Strider* include the “Felines from Wistas 4” of the dedication and the same-named creatures as depicted in the illustration to (142).

68

The hero convinces a young girl to consider using the ComTerm as a game.

❖ Beany the Butler, we learn if the player is unable to crack the code on the door at this reference, is a large, floating, red balloon with a face on it. This is probably based on a similar scenario of a child and a mute, yet interactive red balloon, titled imaginatively enough *The Red Balloon*. This French film (*Le Ballon rouge*, 1956) is a short 35 minutes long and won an Oscar in 1956 for best original screenplay. One other possible influence may have been the Rover from the television series *The Prisoner* (1967~68). This device was a form of security guard for the village, bringing back those who attempt to escape, and took the form of a large weather balloon.

69

The drink leaves the hero feeling a little lightheaded.

❖ For some reason the consumption of a cocktail here, at the start of the adventure, confers a -1 SKILL penalty that apparently lasts for the entire game!

70

❖ The Plaza de Toros mentioned here is the Plaza de Toros de Las Ventas, a famous bullring (“plaza de toros”) located in the city of Madrid, Spain. Construction ran from

Las Ventas Photo: © Montrealais, 2013 Used under Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 License

1922 through to 1929 and two years later in 1931 a charity bullfight marked the official opening of the ring. Outside of bullfighting, it has hosted music concerts and tennis matches.

73

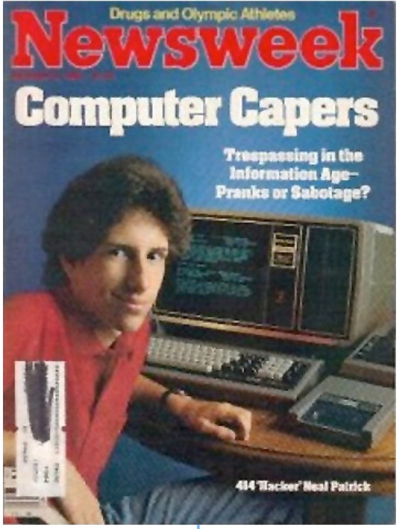
❖ Escargot gets its name from the French dish, where *escargot* means "snail". In France the dish is served as an appetizer and, according to the writings of Pliny the Elder (23~79AD), in ancient Roman times was considered as a food of the elite. Generally in the French style of serving them, the snails are purged, killed, removed from their shells, and then cooked (with garlic butter, wine or chicken stock the usual choices), before being returned to their shells and served with butter and sauce. Special tongs and forks are often provided for eating with.

112

❖ The Grom Moebius Time-Trap takes its name from the Möbius strip that was discovered independently by German mathematicians August Ferdinand Möbius (whom it was named after) and Johann Benedict Listing in 1858. A Möbius strip is, according to mathematics, essentially a surface that has only one side to it and one boundary component. This means that an object, in the case of the adventure in question this is YOU the reader, moving along the surface of the strip would traverse both side of the strip and return to its starting point without ever moving across an edge of the strip. The effect of this in the adventure means that the player is trapped into moving over the same length of area again and again as the end of the strip is joined to the start.

126

❖ Hacker is a term that has evolved since it was first used with reference to computers. Originally the term simply meant someone who was good with computers, but by the early 1980s this was beginning to change. The advent of the popular film *WarGames* (1983) brought the concept of hackers to the attention of the public and soon afterwards the activities of The 414s, a group of teenage hackers, were made known in an article in *Newsweek* magazine (September 5, 1983). These two things helped crystalise the term hacker as a pejorative term. As a result the computing community has tried to use terms such as "black hats" and "white hats" or "cracker" to define the difference between those user who still meet the old definition of hacker and those who meet the expectations of the mainstream definition.



Drugs and Olympic Athletes
Newsweek
Computer Capers
Trespassing in the Information Age—Pranks or Sabotage?
414 'Hacker' Neal Patrick

❖ The 'L' computer language as featured here is most likely modelled on the general-purpose programming language 'C' developed between 1969 and 1973 at the AT&T Bell Labs by Dennis Ritchie (1941~2011). Given how computers operated in the early-to-mid 1980s before the widespread use of graphical user interfaces (GUIs), there is a good chance that Alkaviades was familar with C (or C++ as it evolved into in 1983).

129

❖ "Hacienda" is the Spanish word for *estate* and is also used in countries that were at some point controlled by the Spanish, such as Argentina, Chile, and Mexico.

130

❖ Buying a 'caffine stimulant' sounds like a complicated way of saying they had cup of coffee. While apocryphal tales place the discovery of the effects of drinking the roasted and ground coffee bean to the 9th Century (in a tale at least not written down till 1671), the earliest evidence for the consumption of coffee comes from the 15th Century, where it appears in some Sufi (a branch of Islam) monastries from Yemen as a means of allowing monks to go about their nightly deveotions without fatigue. The bar where the 'stimulant' is bought would likely be based on something that Alkiviades would recall from younger days, the expresso bars that sprung up in England in the early 1950s (and can be seen in the film *Expresso Bongo* from 1959).

151

❖ Is the Roxyrama (an old Vid Palace or 'movie theatre') named after the Roxy Theatre of New York? The Roxy Theatre opened in 1927 and was to be the first of six such theatres inthe New York area, with a seating capcity of 5,920. Costing US$12 million it almost bankrupted Herbet Lubin, the film producer who commissioned the project, and he was forced, prior to the grand opening, to sell his controlling interest to fellow producer William Fox (1879~1952), who had founded the Fox Film Corporation in 1915. The theatre closed in 1960 and was subsequently sold and demolished.

159

❖ Kinta Lopsti is made up of two separate words that both come from eastern Europe. *kinta* is a Serbo-Croatian slang term for "money" (from the Albanian *qintar* or "penny"), while Lopsti is the name of a place in eastern Latvia, near the border with Russia.

168

❖ The Bastille, formally known as Bastille Saint-Antoine, was a fortress in Paris for which construction began in 1357. Initially built as a means of defending the city from on its east side during the Hundred Years War (1337~1453), it became a prison in 1417. It is now most famously known as a symbol of the French revolutionary movement after it, on July 14th, 1789, was stormed by a revolutionary crowd seeking its store of valuable gunpowder. After the revolution the prison was demolished and where it

ESTACION DEL NORTE
colonial
discoteca
restaurante
norte
JACK & JONES

Estación del Norte Photo: © M.M.Minderhoud, 2013 Used under Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 License

once stood is now the Place de la Bastille square. The July column that now stands in the square was added in 1840, even though it had been planned for in the 1792 conversion into a square (the first stone of column was even laid then!). The events of that day in 1789 are still commemorated as La Fête Nationale (*The National Celebration*), more commonly known as Bastille Day in English-speaking countries. In the context of *Star Strider* it appears that at some point in the future history of Earth, someone decided to build a new prison in Paris and call it the Bastille.

186

❖ Brak 9 probably gets its name from *brak* which in English is used as the word "brackish". This can mean unpleasant or a salty water, perhaps hinting at what the planet Brak 9 is like.

197

❖ An Alcázar is a type of castle built in Spain or Portugal. While the one in Madrid was destroyed by fire in 1734 (and now has the Palacio Real de Madrid (*Royal Palace of Madrid*) built on the same site), others do still survive to the present day including one in Toldeo, some 70km south of Madrid.

❖ The idea of malfunctioning androids with a western theme is the basis of the science fiction film *Westworld* (1973) which stars Yul Brynner (1920~1985). In the film there is a theme park populated with androids divided into 'worlds' (West World, Medieval World, and Roman World) where human can indulge their fantasies. There is a system failure and the androids run amok, killing the patrons. The film was followed by a sequel in 1976 (*Futureworld*) and a short-lived television series in 1980 (*Beyond Westworld*). This event in this book is clearly modelled on the moment in the film where one of the main characters, unaware of the android malfunction, indulges Byrnner's Gunslinger android in a shoot out (thinking he can't be hurt) with fatal results. The *Westworld* idea has since been parodied in things such as the *Red Dwarf* episode *Meltdown* (1991) and *The Simpsons* episode *Itchy & Scratchy Land* (1994).

208

❖ Depicted on the map here is the London underground and its logo. The idea of an underground rail network was first proposed in 1830 and permission granted for work to begin in 1854. The network opened in January 1863 (the underground celebrated 150 years this year) with the line between Paddington and Farrington (now part of the Metropolitan Line). When compared to a map of the underground as it was in 1987, the illustration features almost all of the main lines currently running at that time, but most however only appear in part (basically the parts that match central London). The lines that feature are the Circle, Central, Northern, Piccadilly, Victoria, Jubilee, and Bakerloo Lines with only the District and Metropolitan Lines missing out. Also absent from the illustrated map (and there in the official 1987 tube map) are the East London Line, the Docklands Light Railway, and the British Rail links. Since 1987, barring extentions to lines existing in 1987 and station closures, the only major change to the underground has been the invention of the Hammersmith & City Line (which began in 1988, although until 1990 it would appear on the map as part of the Metropolitan Line).

❖ The current stylised, diagrammatic map of the underground was first devised by Harry Beck (1902~1974) in 1933 and, apart from one map in 1939, he would be responsible for its design through to 1960.

❖ The logo (the circle with the bar through it, which appears in the bottom right-hand corner of the illustrated map) for the underground has obscured origins, but the design was already being used for platform signs by 1907 and as a logo for the entire network by 1911.

UNDERGROUND

382

❖ The Estación del Norte was the name of a train station in western Madrid, and is now known as Príncipe Pío (something, as with the changes to the London Underground (see 208)) Alkaviades sadly didn't anticipate when penning his futuristic adventure).
It was opened in 1882 and closed for refurbishment in 1993, reopening again in 1995 under its new name.

400

The hero has succeeded in their mission and is now quite wealthy.

❖ The Iridium AmEx Credit Card hits upon a couple of points. Firstly, "AmEx" is a long-standing nickname for American Express, the multinational financial services company that was originally founded in 1850 as an express mail service. Secondly, the Iridium Credit Card is a nod to the Platinum Credit Card which American Express had only recently introduced, having done so in 1984 (the Gold Card had been introduced in 1966).

❖ Did Alkaviades have a sequel in mind when he ended this adventure? Probably not given his next book was *Chasms of Malice*, but we can have fun imagining what a sequel might have been like!

Titannica, the Fighting Fantasy Wiki

Titannica, the Fighting Fantasy Wiki, is introduced as the primer for a new, regular *Fighting Fantazine* series, “From Titannica”, which will feature brand-new entries adapted from the online encyclopedia.

by WARREN MCGUIRE

How it began

Fans have no doubt always been interested in having an encyclopedia where everything we know about *Fighting Fantasy* is brought together in one single place. I know I have – as early as 1987, I was compiling a database of the books and their authors and illustrators on a school computer (which was when I first realised that Ian and Steve hadn’t written them all!). But that was pretty basic stuff.

With the advent of personal computers and, especially, the internet, things moved to a new level (despite, or possibly because of, the franchise coming to a temporary end in the mid 1990s). Fan-sites such as the The Shrine of Hamaskis, Advancedfightingfantasy.com, JEDIboyy’s Encyclopaedia of Titan and, most significantly, Ken Beuden’s Fang’s Finest Emporium, with its Theology and Khulian encyclopedias, bloomed on the web and stimulated new interest in detailing the world of *Fighting Fantasy* in all its splendour.

In 2005, a number of us on the Yahoo! discussion group titan_rebuilding began considering ways of creating a large, systematic database of information gleaned from the *Fighting Fantasy* books. Initially we went for databases within the Yahoo! group, compiling the Titan Bestiary, Rogues’ Gallery and Herbal (largely thanks to the hard work of Andy ‘greyarea13’ Wright).

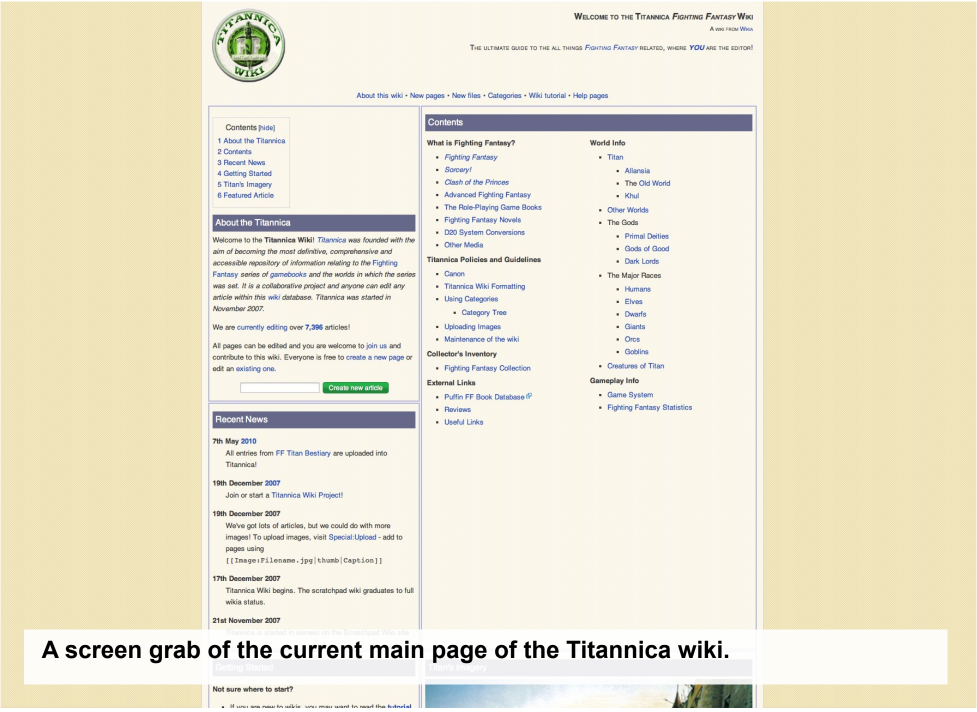
These databases were innovative in that they listed every beast and plant mentioned in *Fighting Fantasy*, whether as an opponent or incidentally in the text, provided stats where they were known, and listed *every* page or paragraph in the *Fighting Fantasy* books where the creature or plant was referred to. With a quick search you can use these databases to look up where to find out as much as you want about the creatures and plants of Titan and beyond.

But the databases are limited, containing as they do only the names and types of the creatures and plants, along with basic stats and full references. If you want to find out more about them, you have to go to the books themselves. And they don’t cover places, history, and all the myriad things which make up *Fighting Fantasy*.

So on November 18th, 2007, Ken Beuden proposed that what we needed was a *Fighting Fantasy* Wiki – an online, editable, hyperlinked encyclopedia which would contain as much information as we were willing and able to put in it. Ken, having developed several online *Fighting Fantasy* encyclopedias, was in an ideal position to start such a project, and on November 21st, 2007 he launched the Titannica Scratchpad Wiki (a starter kind of Wiki for new projects).

Very quickly thereafter, he flooded Titannica with thousands of articles from his Theology and Khulian encyclopedias, while several of us beavered away adding new articles on topics as diverse as the location of Gundobad, *F.I.S.T.*, the use of gunpowder in Titan, and the different types of Crocodiles found in *Fighting Fantasy*. Very quickly, the Scratchpad reached the point where it could graduate on to full Wiki status, and Titannica in its current form was born on December 17th, 2007.

Almost immediately after that, the team was joined by the prolific editor ‘Gallicus’ (none other than our editor here at *Fighting Fantazine*, Alex), who set about standardising all of the entries on Titannica and doing all sorts of necessary fixes as he went along. With his considerable help, Titannica has gone from strength to strength, and now boasts articles on every aspect of *Fighting Fantasy* (including, thanks to some nifty work by Ken, all the entries in the indispensible Titan Rebuilding databases).



WELCOME TO THE TITANNICA *FIGHTING FANTASY* WIKI

A WIKI FROM WIKIA

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO THE ALL THINGS *FIGHTING FANTASY* RELATED, WHERE **YOU** ARE THE EDITOR!

About this wiki • New pages • New files • Categories • Wiki tutorial • Help pages

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2 Contents
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4 Getting Started
5 Titan's Imagery
6 Featured Article

About the Titannica

Welcome to the **Titannica Wiki**! *Titannica was founded with the aim of becoming the most definitive, comprehensive and accessible repository of information relating to the* Fighting Fantasy *series of gamebooks and the worlds in which the series was set. It is a collaborative project and anyone can edit any article within this wiki database. Titannica was started in November 2007.*

We are currently editing over **7,396** articles!

All pages can be edited and you are welcome to join us and contribute to this wiki. Everyone is free to create a new page or edit an existing one.

Create new article

Recent News

7th May 2010
All entries from FF Titan Bestiary are uploaded into Titannica!

19th December 2007
Join or start a Titannica Wiki Project!

19th December 2007
We've got lots of articles, but we could do with more images! To upload images, visit Special:Upload - add to pages using `[[Image:Filename.jpg|thumb|Caption]]`

17th December 2007
Titannica Wiki begins. The scratchpad wiki graduates to full wikia status.

21st November 2007
Titannica is started in earnest on the Scratchpad Wiki site

Getting Started

Not sure where to start?

- If you are new to wikis, you may want to read the tutorial

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- *Clash of the Princes*
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  - Giants
  - Orcs
  - Goblins
- Creatures of Titan

Gameplay Info

- Game System
- Fighting Fantasy Statistics

Titan's Imagery

A screen grab of the current main page of the Titannica wiki.

Aims and guidelines

The aim of Titannica is nothing less than to detail everything there is to know about *Fighting Fantasy*, from the history of the franchise, its products and the people involved in it, to the peoples, places and histories of the fantasy worlds in which the gamebooks are set. If this sounds like an ambitious undertaking, that's because it is! There's certainly enough work to occupy a large team of editors for years.

Articles in Titannica can be written either from an 'in-world' or an 'external' viewpoint. The 'external' viewpoint is unavoidable for articles about the books, authors, game mechanics and so on. It can also be used in articles about things which 'live' in the fantasy worlds of *Fighting Fantasy*, but here an 'in-world' perspective is also useful. Note the difference between "Zillah of Shekin (in Ruddlestone) is a witch named in *Spellbreaker*. We are told that she was burned for her heretical views." and "Zillah was a witch from Shekin in Ruddlestone who was burned for her heretical views."

Both are fine. The 'in-world' style is less sterile, but it does bring with it the risk of introducing non-canon detail and a loss of subjectivity. So, for example "Zillah, an old witch from Shekin in the middle of Ruddlestone, was burned at the stake some time ago. It is said that she held heretical views which contradicted the teachings of the Citadel." goes too far, even if it does sound more exciting. It is worth remembering that Titannica is a catalogue of what we know about *Fighting Fantasy*, not an exercise of creation like *Titan – The Fighting Fantasy World*.

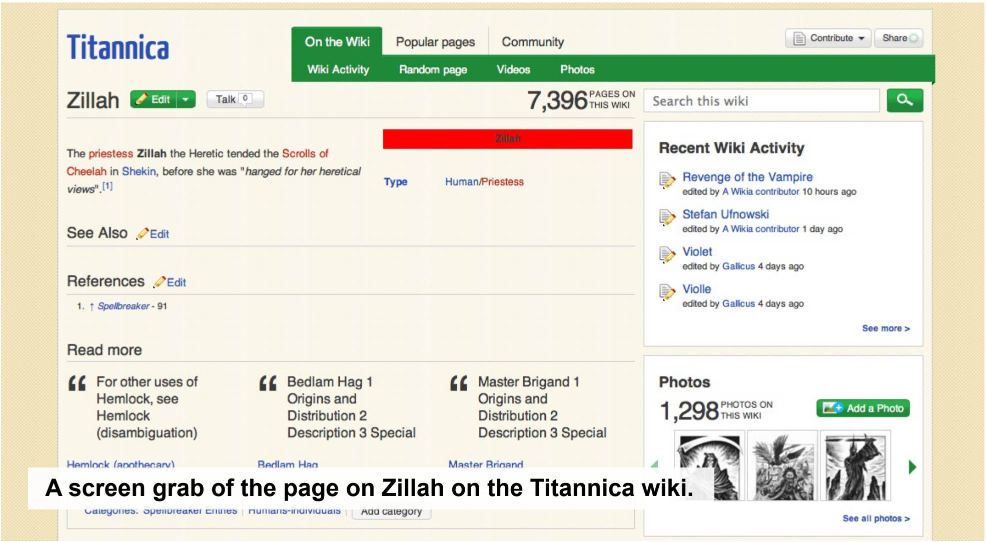
Our aim in Titannica is not only to be comprehensive, but also to be the most accurate source of information on *Fighting Fantasy* that there is. To that end, all articles in the Wiki should provide, like Wikipedia articles are supposed to, full referencing for all of the information given. So the article on Zillah of Shekin should provide the paragraph numbers in *Spellbreaker* where the information about her has been found (in this case, paragraph 91).

Articles without references (or without enough references) will be flagged as incomplete and potentially inaccurate, to alert readers that more work needs to be done or that they should treat the information provided with caution. After all, if you want to find out something about Zillah, and you simply read (without seeing any supporting references) that she was a witch from Shekin who was burned at the stake, how do you know that this is accurate, that the author wasn't just making it up off the top of their head, or that the vandals haven't been at their evil work again?

Where we're at

As of April 2013, Titannica contains over 7,300 articles. It has a way to go before it catches up with the likes of Wookipedia (at over 90,000 articles!), but that's not a bad number considering the small number of us who have been working on it. There are articles for the vast majority of places in Titan, for anything and everything from Khul and to do with the gods of Titan, and for all known people, products and merchandise associated with the *Fighting Fantasy* franchise.

That said, a lot of the articles are in an unfinished state, especially since many of them were created by importing entries from the titan_rebuilding databases (which contain only basic information) or from Ken's encyclopedias. The entries which originate in Ken's encyclopedias sometimes cause confusion for new readers. Ken designed his encyclopedias from a 'in-world' perspective, so that they aren't always written like a Wiki article and sometimes contain non-canon material. But that's why they are in the Wiki – so that we can all have a go at making them compatible (I'm currently on a hunt and destroy mission for articles which contain non-canon material, but as that involves working through over 7000 articles, it's going to take some time!).



The priestess Zillah the Heretic tended the Scrolls of Cheelah in Shekin, before she was "*hanged for her heretical views*".[1]

1. ↑ *Spellbreaker* - 91

For other uses of Hemlock, see Hemlock (disambiguation)

Bedlam Hag 1 Origins and Distribution 2 Description 3 Special

Master Brigand 1 Origins and Distribution 2 Description 3 Special

Hemlock (apothecary)

Bedlam Hag

Master Brigand

Revenge of the Vampire
edited by A Wikia contributor 10 hours ago

Stefan Ufnowski
edited by A Wikia contributor 1 day ago

Violet
edited by Gallicus 4 days ago

Violle
edited by Gallicus 4 days ago

A screen grab of the page on Zillah on the Titannica wiki.

Some areas of *Fighting Fantasy* lore are rather under-represented in Titannica, for example, rules and statistics from the regular series and from the role-playing books such as *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* and the d20 modules, people and artefacts from across much of Titan itself, and pretty much everything from the non-Titan books.

Titannica needs you!

Compiling Titannica is a slow job, as we make sure that it is both accurate and comprehensive, and fend off the inevitable spammers and vandals. It only has a small number of regular editors (particularly myself and Alex/Gallicus) who work on it in those ever decreasing bits of free time we can squeeze out of the day. So why not come and join us?

All you need to have is an interest in *Fighting Fantasy*, a reasonable knowledge of the subject (I suspect, like me, you'll learn much more as you go), access to a computer and the internet, a collection of *Fighting Fantasy* books to find out what you need to know, and a bit of spare time. If you are reading this article, you probably have all of these already... You also don't need any programming skills or knowledge of how the internet works – just jump right in, and have a look at other, more polished articles when you want to do anything fancy like add a picture, type 'SKILL', or provide references.

You can visit Titannica at:
fightingfantasy.wikia.com

WARNING: editing of Titannica can be addictive and may take over your life!

X Marks the

THE QUEST FOR THE MISSING GAMEBOOK

Avast me hearties! 'Tis time to set sail on the good ship *Fighting Fantasy* and seek the lost book known as *Bloodbones*! Travel back in time to before the "financial downturn", Lady Gaga and the first *Pirates of the Carribean* film, to trace the emergence of the fabled "lost" Puffin gamebook number 60...

Feature by ALEXANDER BALLINGALL

Today anyone can simply walk into a reputable bookseller and find somewhere on the shelves the modern Wizard Books editions of the *Fighting Fantasy* range. One of those, reissued as part of "Series 2", was Jonathan Green's fourth adventure, the piratical *Bloodbones*. But being able to easily pluck this particular *Fighting Fantasy* tale off a shelf was not always the case, as it took the book a good decade to reach readers. So what was the tortured journey of this story?

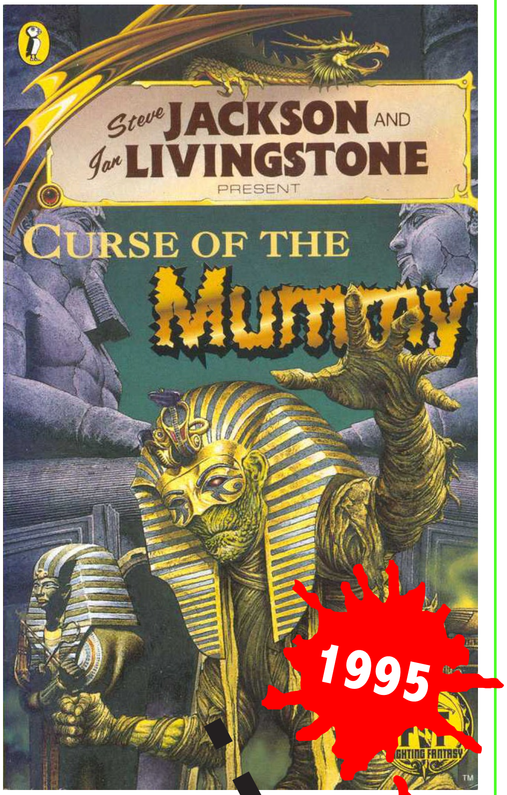
TERMINAL

By 1994 the *Fighting Fantasy* series had slowed the release rate from a giddy nine releases in 1986 at the height of the gamebook craze to only two, and what would turn out to be the final year of the Puffin range, 1995, would only manage three. 1995 however hadn't been the intended end of the series, with plans ahead for further titles in 1996 and beyond.

Puffin Books internally appears to have had concerns at the ongoing sales of the range before 1995, hence the smaller number of new titles issued each year. Paul Mason's feelings about the situation was that:

> *I got the impression that although Puffin were very happy about the income that FF brought in, many members of staff were uncomfortable with it. Its spectacular success was, in a way, the cause of its downfall. It could be characterised as a craze, and the fall in its sales used as an excuse to axe it. Never mind that FF, even with reduced sales, might still be doing better than some other Puffin books -- let's hypothetically say books about ponies -- the trend was down and it suited them better to divert resources from a line they had reservations about.*[1]

Whether or not this idea holds true, Puffin were concerned about the range. Prior to the publication of what would be the final book, Jonathan Green's *Curse of the Mummy*, plans had already been afoot to explore means of revamping the range to make it appeal once more to its target audience. Ideas that had been bandied about included having electronic dice mounted to the cover, and one that almost made it to fruition – reducing the adventures to 300 paragraphs.[2]



DEATH-WATCH

Meanwhile the freelance editor for the series, Marc Gascoigne, was assembling potential titles for 1996. Gascoigne himself had settled on writing book 60, the adventure going by the intriguing title *Night of the Creature* and one which would mark his first non-editorial contribution since 1988's *Battleblade Warrior*. Jonathan Green, in the wake of completing *Curse of the Mummy*, had submitted several ideas for his next gamebook. Of these, two were immediately deemed promising: *Saga of the Stormchaser*, a tale involving the Viking-like peoples of Frostholm; and *Pirates of the Black Skull*, a pirate/voodoo adventure. The slot of book 61 was given to *Pirates of the Black Skull*.

The first snag that the series hit was that Gascoigne found himself unable to set aside the time needed to pen his adventure and so the two books swapped release order to accommodate this. Now lined up as book 60, Green awaited his contract to begin writing and the adventure took on the title under which it would be rumoured for years – *Bloodbones*. However, by the August of 1995 the book had yet to be commissioned due to the second snag – a choice had yet to be made about which of the above related ideas about revamping the range would be pursued.

Eventually, by the end of 1995 a decision had been made: the series would continue as 300 paragraph adventures (and Gascoigne would edit older titles down to this new 'magic number'

Spot

for reissuing). The decision made, Green was finally contracted to provide the book with a deadline of February 1996, the new title to be released later in the year. Alongside Green, artist Mike Posen was engaged to provide art for the book.

However, October 1995's *Curse of the Mummy* would prove to be the end of the Puffin Books series.

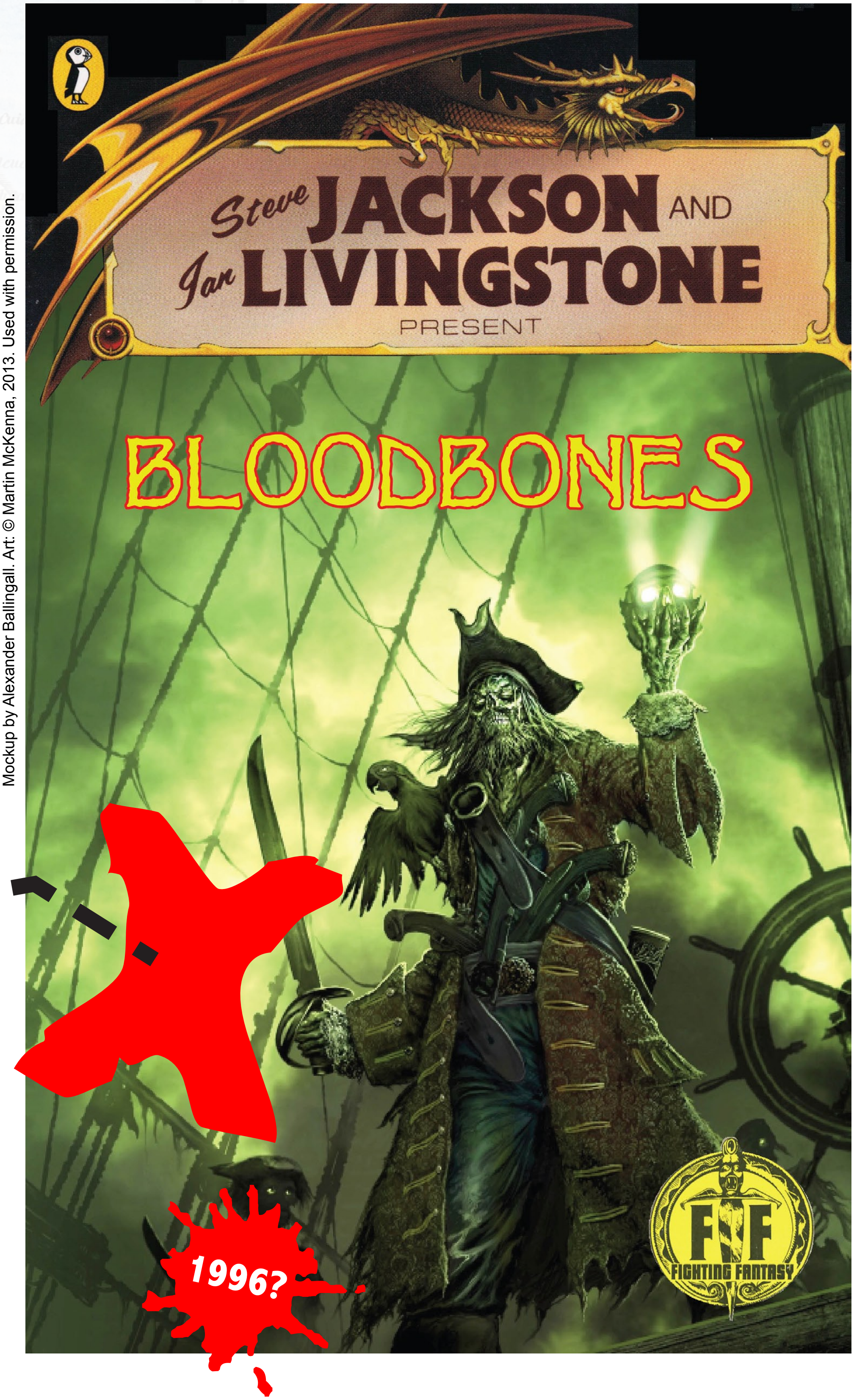
RUMOURS OF DEATH

At the same point in time that the range ended, the world of online communication was beginning to take off, connecting *Fighting Fantasy* fandom in a way it had only briefly managed with the letters pages of *Warlock* magazine a decade earlier. One early source of discussion within the fledgling online community was future titles and somehow the existence of *Bloodbones* was leaked to fandom. The backbone of what follows, charting the highs and lows of the rumours surrounding this book, is indebted to material collected and posted on the original Fightingfantasy.com as run by Mark J. Popp.

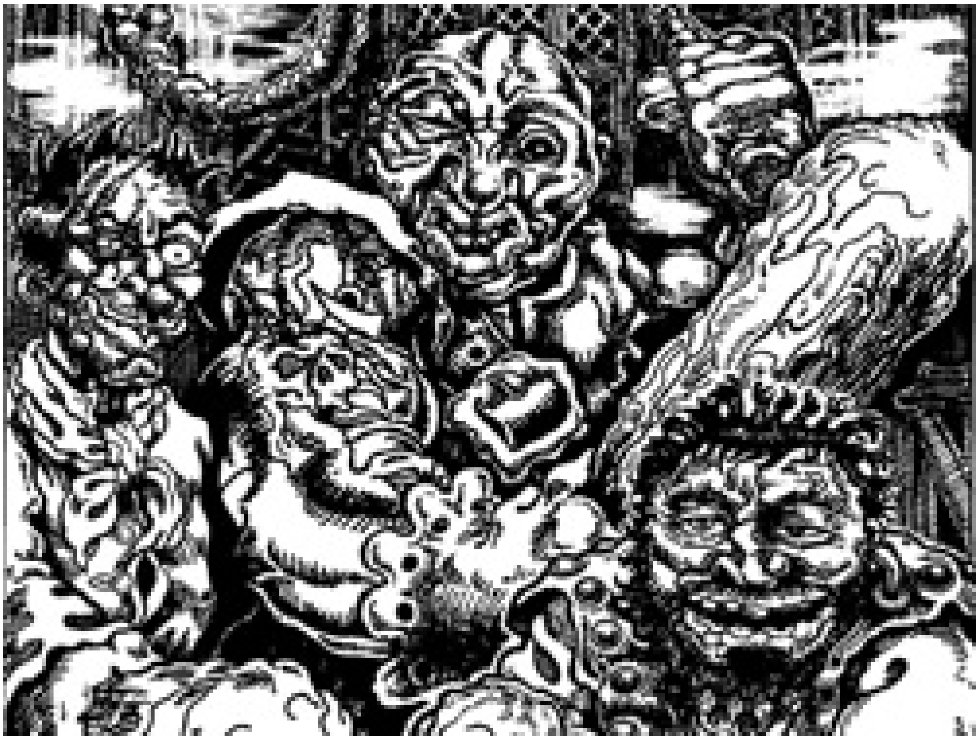
After much fan speculation on who exactly would be writing the book, it was fellow *Fighting Fantasy* scribe Paul Mason who finally fingered Jonathan Green as the author of the phantom book.[3] The question of who the artist was would not be settled so quickly or easily!

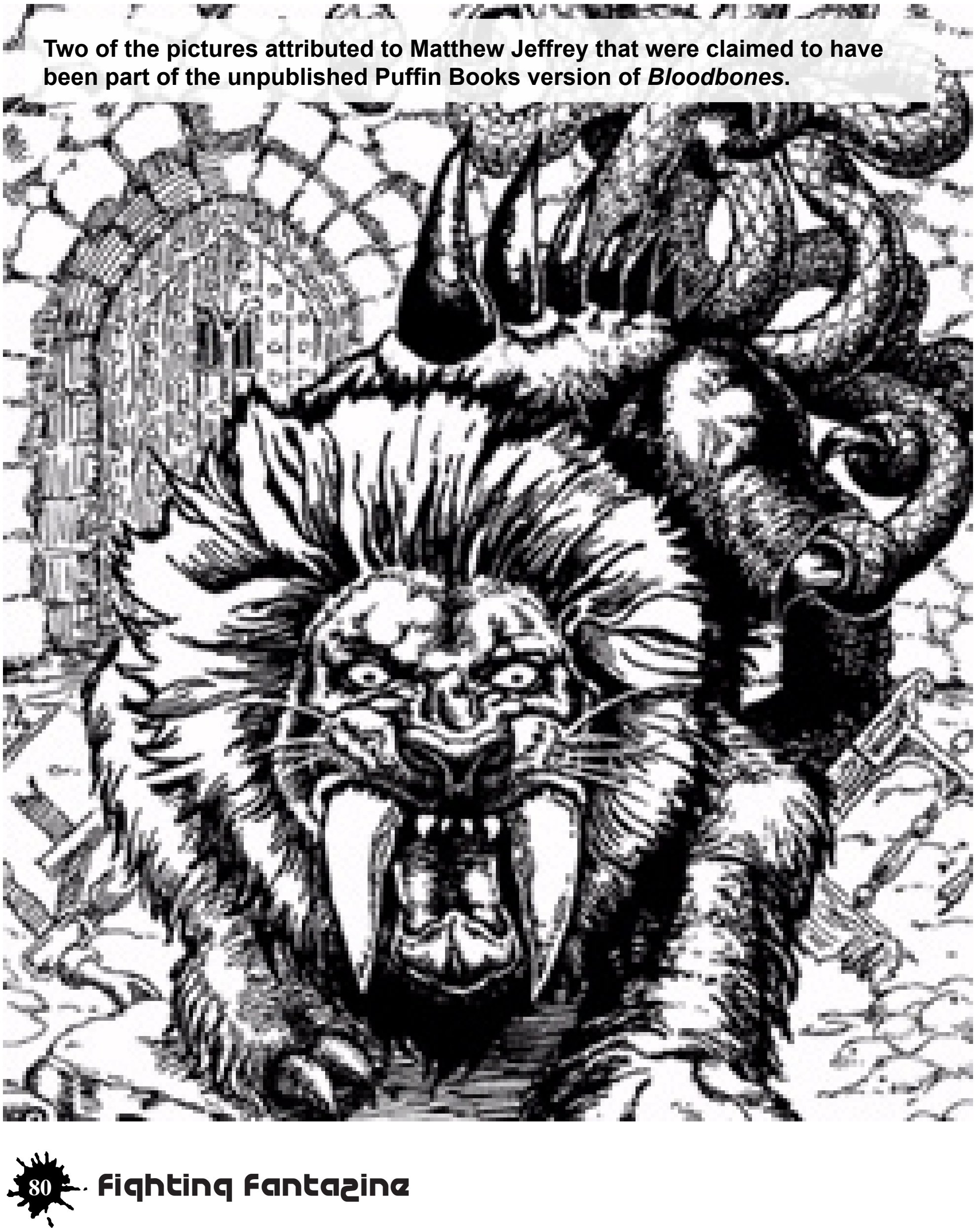
At the same time however, rumours circulated that the book had in fact been published, probably not helped by various online retailers/publishers possibly listing the commissioned title as next in line for publication. Popp noted that in 1996:

> *I came across a website that had a complete list of books, including* Bloodbones. *I just assumed it was coming out at the time. When it didn't, I looked for the website again, but it has completely disappeared.*[3]



Mockup by Alexander Ballingall. Art: © Martin McKenna, 2013. Used with permission.





Two of the pictures attributed to Matthew Jeffrey that were claimed to have been part of the unpublished Puffin Books version of *Bloodbones*.

Somewhat amusingly this mutated within fandom into the idea that the book had been physically published and then later pulped before release. (The pulping of books, destroying them via burning or recycling, can take place for a variety of reasons, but is usually the result of poor sales.) On top of this however came the further idea that a handful of copies of the title slipped out to book dealers, despite no one later ever coming forward with a copy.

This is not a completely fanciful notion as it does happen on occasion, as this author can attest (having in my possession a copy of *The Avengers Programme Guide* by Paul Cornell, Martin Day, and Keith Topping, a book that was pulped before release due to an offending sentence). However there is no evidence that *Bloodbones* ever reached this stage. At the most, it may have reached a proof stage (a physical copy of the intended book for checking everything is correct before ordering a print run). One final rumour was a variation of the pulped copy one, in that Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone were given copies of the completed book.[4]

TRIAL

Perhaps spurred on by these rumours of publication, some fans set out to find out what was actually going on with the book. Writer Jonathan Green had been told late 1996 was the planned slot, but as we'll see not everyone was so sure of that date and as the end of 1996 drew near fans began a hunt to nail down a tangible publication date. Fan Graham Hart wrote to Penguin Books at the time looking for information and had

> *received back a prompt, though short, reply (dated 18 October 1996) informing me that: 'The sixtieth adventure,* BLOODBONES, *is due to be published early in 1998.'*[3]

Others were on the hunt too. Chris Rivett chimed in, noting

> *interesting news from Australia about 'number 60* Bloodbones*' is that the release date of the book keeps getting put back. The latest according to them [is] that they say it would be out January of next year*.[3]

Tony Willier called Penguin-Canada customer service and "a representative told him that #60 *Bloodbones* is slated to come out late June 1998."[3]

THE WEB

If this wasn't bad enough, the book then began cropping up at online booksellers along with an ISBN number (0-14-038317-4) which had presumably been assigned to it by Puffin when they had contracted Green to write the book in early 1996. It was listed at Bookstore.co.uk for £4.99 (where it was even claimed that the book *had* been published in 1997) and at Amazon.com (in the September of 1999) where it was listed as supposedly being released in paperback format in June 2001 for US$9.95. *Fighting Fantasy* cocreator Steve Jackson was alerted to this listing of the book and later communicated the following:

> *Don't send any money! They're hoping you'll have forgotten about it by the time it is supposed to be published. No publisher would ever set a retail price now for a book which will be published in 2 years time.*[3]

Many fans did attempt to purchase the phantom book anyway, eventually receiving the following email from Amazon:

> *We are sorry to report that the availability of the following item has changed:*
>
> *Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone "Fighting Fantasy:Bloodbones(60)"*
>
> *It is actually not yet published, but we will keep this title on order for you until it is released. In most cases, this means the title has sold out at the publisher and now needs to be reprinted. When it becomes available, the status of the item on the "Your Account" page on our Web site (http://www.amazon.co.uk/) will change from "Not Yet Published" to "On order from publisher".*
>
> *For your reference, here is a summary of your order:*
>
> *1 of Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone "Fighting Fantasy:Bloodbones(60)"*
>
> *Not yet published.*[3]

AFTERMATH

Despite all this, indications that the party was all over began surfacing as early as 1997. Late that year fan Matthew wrote that "through an RPG mailing list, Paul Mason ... said that, in English speaking countries at least, *FF* is dead as a dodo." Another fan, using the handle 'Carrot' popped in to add that

> *I wrote to Penguin Books' UK HQ about* Fighting Fantasy *books (especially about any new releases). Last Friday I received a reply from Penguin Books' Editor. And, I hope you're sitting down, she said that Penguin certainly did NOT have any plans to continue the* FF *series. Well, it looks like there will be no number sixty after all.*[3]

Graham Hart was able to confirm this:

> *In August I wrote again to Penguin asking after future plans for the* FF *range, and received back, from the Children's Editorial department, a letter dated 7 September 1998 and containing the following paragraph: 'Unfortunately the* Fighting Fantasy *fan club is no longer up and running and the* FIGHTING FANTASY *books themselves, including* BLOODBONES, *are no longer being published. At the moment we do not have any plans to republish the series.'*[3]

STEVE JACKSON AND IAN LIVINGSTONE
BLOODBONES
BRAND NEW ADVENTURE
A Fighting Fantasy Gamebook in which YOU are the hero!
2006
SPECIAL LIMITED EDITION
FIGHTING FANTASY

GAMES

Even as all this was leading to a neat conclusion, a fan with a strange sense of humour decided to muddy the waters. In late 2000 the owner of the fan website AMYLASE, John Stock, was contacted by one Matthew Jeffrey who was claiming to have been the illustrator of the abandoned *Bloodbones* book (writer Jonathan Green wouldn't reveal the identity of the real artist hired to illustrate the book till a letter to John Stock in 2001[2]).

To help support his claim, Jeffrey supplied Stock with three illustrations he stated as belonging to the unpublished book, a title which he also asserted as being written by Ian Livingstone. (A fourth illustration was suppled by a 'Karl' and is of unknown provinence.)[2]

THE WAY BACK

In 2002 the *Fighting Fantasy* series returned to print under the Wizard Books imprint, and one of the immediate questions that fans asked was whether or not *Bloodbones* might see print at last:

> *Today I learnt that there's an all-new* FF *Gamebook in the works named* Eye of the Dragon. *It's by Ian Livingstone, so that to me indicates enough interest to possibly resurrect* Bloodbones.[2]

Jonathan Green later revealed in an interview that he had got in touch with Steve Jackson after learning of the relaunch to feel out possibilities for writing new titles, only to have Jackson comment that "he had always hoped to see *Bloodbones* in print one day".[5]

Finally in 2006, almost exactly ten years after it had originally been scheduled for publication, *Bloodbones* was finally published as book #26 in the Wizard Books *Fighting Fantasy* series. Admittedly, the book did differ in a number of ways from the title fans might have been able to purchase a decade earlier. Regular *Fighting Fantasy* artist Martin McKenna was contracted to provide new cover and Tony Hough the interior art, allowing Jonathan Green to select new paragraphs to be illustrated on a couple of occasions.[5] Additionally, the book was allocated 400 references, making it a third longer than the original manuscript.

So now fans the world over (even the French who finally got a translation of their own in June 2012) can kick back and relax with their favourite beverage, a couple of dice, a pencil and eraser and enjoy the gamebook that nearly got away... *Bloodbones*!

---

[1] Mason, P. (2013). Email conversation with the author of the article.

[2] Green, J. (2001). Letter from Jon Green re Bloodbones. Internet Archive record of AMYLASE. Retrieved from http://web.archive.org/web/20090723123837/http://uk.geocities.com/amylaseff/letter-jg.html

[3] Popp, M. (1999). [60] Bloodbones. Internet Archive record of Fightingfantasy.com. Retrieved from http://web.archive.org/web/20051001021519/www.fightingfantasy.com/ffb60.htm

[4] Stock, J. (2005). Bloodbones Dossier. Internet Archive record of AMYLASE. Retrieved from http://web.archive.org/web/20090723123825/http://uk.geocities.com/amylaseff/bbd.html

[5] Green, J. (2009). The Grass is Always Greener. *Fighting Fantazine* #1.

AELOUS RAVEN AND THE

by IAN BROCKLEHURST
Art by ANGELA SALAMALIKI

CHAPTER 6

The Sea Witch's led the adventurers along a few corridors and then raised a hand for them to stop. She motioned towards the curtained doorway that lay before her. 'Go through there into the Chamber of Judgment and I shall join you in a moment. I must enter in my own unique way.'

'Must we?' asked Orchid. 'I grow tired of your parlour tricks, Witch.'

Cove shook her head slightly. 'My dear Amazon, if you continue to have those thoughts running through your head.'

'What thoughts?'

'The ones in which you think you can just sneak up behind me and slit my throat from ear-to-ear.'

Orchid gasped and tried to stop herself from blushing. Clearly, at that very moment she was thinking of just that.

'Yes, my dear. Those thoughts,' continued the Sea Witch 'anyway if you think you can succeed in such futile efforts then by all means have a go. Try and kill me. You will fail and in failing you will forfeit your own life.'

'Are you threatening me?' growled Orchid.

'No, I'm simply stating that if you intend to follow through with those thoughts at any point in the future then you will die.'

'We'll see about that.' Orchid started to move towards the Sea Witch, but Hacksaw grabbed her by the arm and held her tightly. He whispered to her in Elvish.

'Listen to the counsel of your friend, Amazon' beamed Cove. 'The future is what you make it, but any attempt on my life will end in your death.'

'I'm not afraid of you,' hissed Orchid who shirked off Hacksaw's grip and pointed a finger straight at the Sea Witch. 'I'm extraordinary good at witch slaying.'

'Have you learned nothing from my memory show?' I'm no mere witch and your bravado means nothing to me. I can feel your fear. It's a primordial feeling that I lost a long, long time ago.'

'You can hide behind your magic all you want, Witch. All I ask is for a fair fight, woman-to-woman with knives or swords.'

Cove smiled a coyly and twisted her head a little as she cast her eyes over the group of adventures. 'Hide behind my magic. My dear, you were hiding behind magic' she opened both her hands face up 'but I've freed you from that.' The adventures could see in one hand was two gold rings and the other had three golden dragon talismans.'

'By the beard of Titan,' cried Conar 'my magic ring.'

'Mine too,' added Noakes who looked towards Hacksaw. 'So much for your Elvish magic.'

Raven didn't even bother to check if he was still wearing his talisman, he knew it was there in her hand.

'Now,' continued the Sea Witch. 'Get in there and afterwards you can get on your way along with the girl you came to rescue. Okay?'

'Yes,' agreed Raven. 'The sooner we leave the better.'

'Hmm,' sighed Cove in reply 'wise words, Aeolus. Let's hope the future plays out that way.'

Raven took the lead and walked through the curtained doorway and the other four quickly followed him. Hacksaw was the last to enter the Chamber of Judgment. As he disappeared between the curtains, the Sea Witch shook her head and sighed deeply to herself. She already knew how the future was going to turn out. With a deft shrug of her shoulders, she snapped herself out of those sad thoughts and then clicked the fingers on her right hand. She instantaneously disappeared from the corridor.

The five rescuers found themselves in a huge cavern, the ceiling to which could not be seen by the flickering torches that hung on the walls of the roughly thirty-square metre room. In the centre of the room was a trapdoor made of wrought iron with a single circular handle fixed in the middle of it. From that handle a chain ran through it that reached to the inky darkness of the vaulted ceiling. In one corner of the room was a simple stone carved throne sat upon a dais flanked by two guards. Behind the throne on the wall could be a seen a stretched piece of blank, white canvas. Two more guards stood by one of the walls and next to each of those men stood a male prisoner. Their status was marked by the chains that had been attached to their ankles.

Somewhere within the room an unseen bell gave a solitary toll.
The Sea Witch appeared in front of the stone throne causing both the prisoners and the adventurers to jump a little. Delfina Cove was dressed in a black robe and her face was covered by a golden human skull mask.

'I have answered the call of the Bell of Judgment,' she said quite clearly, despite the golden mask. In fact, Raven guessed that the mask was augmenting her voice. 'For when that solemn bell tolls it tolls for none but me, for on this island it has been written in a covenant of blood that I am the Law.'
Orchid was about to say something, but Hacksaw pressed his elbow against her indicating that it was best if she remained silent.

'Today, we have some welcomed visitors to the proceedings,' continued the Sea Witch pointing in the direction of the five rescuers. 'Their presence will not influence my decisions in any way. Proceed with the first case.'

As Cove sat down on the stone throne gracefully, one of the soldiers pushed a bearded prisoner forward until they stood before the Sea Witch.

'This is... ' began the guard.

'Jeremiah Rincewind,' interrupted Cove 'son of Marcellus.'

The prisoner nodded in awe.

WRATH OF THE SEA-WITCH

‘What is your crime, Jeremiah?’

‘Theft, your Highness.’

‘What did you steal?’

‘A pig.’

‘A pig?’

‘A right fine pig too it was. Old Man Stickler wouldn’t let me have it despite our agreement, so I took it and we ate it.’

‘We?’

‘My wife and three sons, your Highness. We had a daughter, but she was born a weak ‘un and didn’t make it through the bad winter two years ago.’

‘I’m sorry for your loss.’

‘Thank you,’ answered Rincewind as he rubbed his nose absent mindedly as his thoughts momentarily drifted back to his little girl. ‘Anyway, I says we ate it ‘cos I can’t give Old Man Stickler his porker back. He was right livid about me taking it and so he called the Guard...’

‘As is his right to report stolen property,’ pointed out Cove ‘I am curious, Jeremiah. What was your agreement with Old Man Stickler?’

‘I said I’d fix his chicken coops and instead of money I thought I’d take one of his pigs for my family. Bit of pork would make a change from fish.’

‘Sounds like a fair deal. How many chicken coops did you fix?’

‘Eight, your Highness. The ninth was beyond repair.’

‘Eight chicken coops repaired for one pig? I assume it was a large pig?’

‘Oh, aye it was Old Man Stickler’s largest porker.’

‘Yet when you had done your work, he refused to hand over the pig?’

Rincewind nodded. ‘He said he couldn’t just give away that pig and instead offered me half a dozen chickens.’

‘Did you take the chickens?’

Rincewind did not answer.

‘Jeremiah’ said the Sea Witch, firmly. ‘Did you accept the offer of six chickens?’

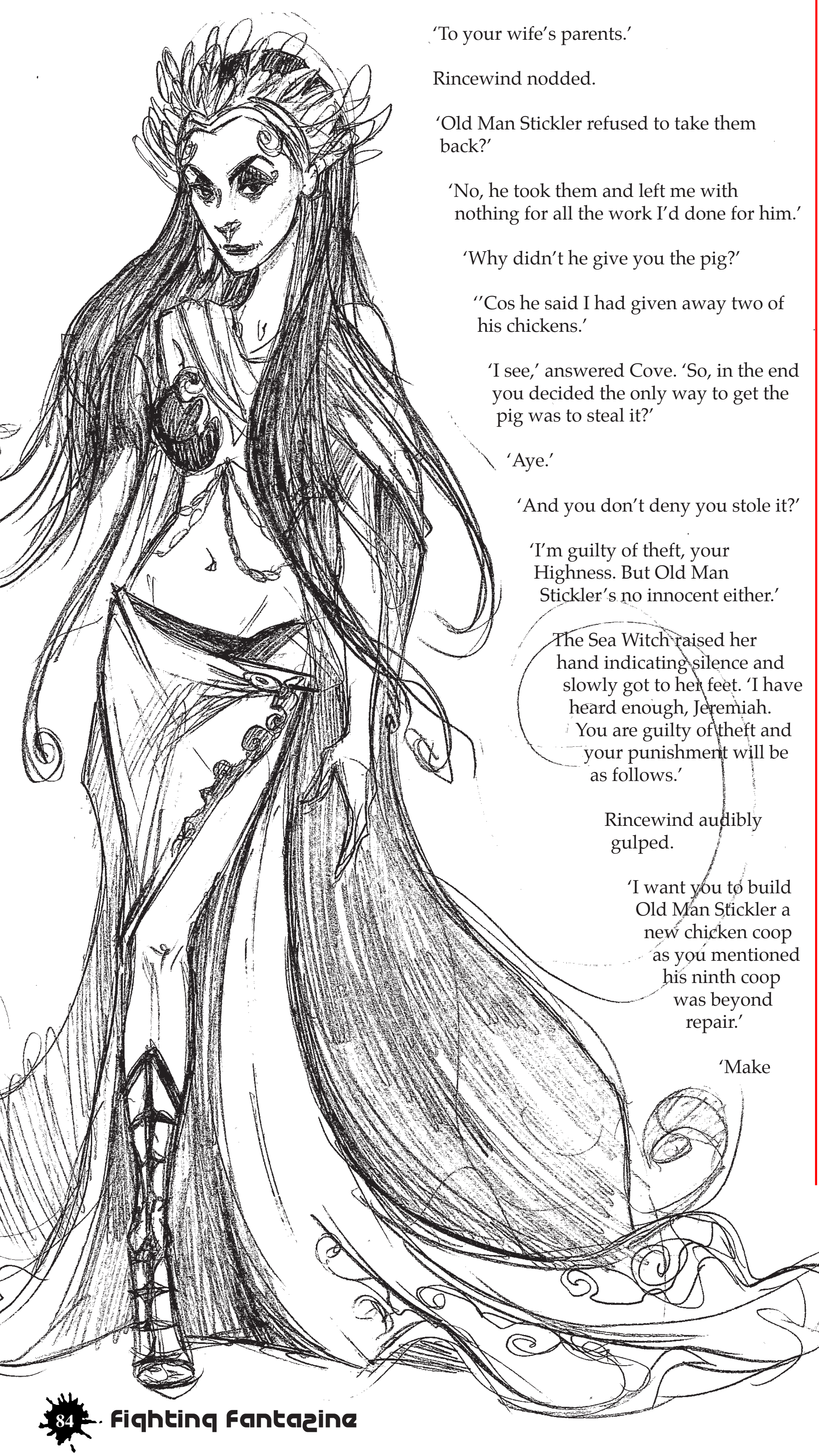
Rincewind nodded. ‘Aye, your Highness. I took those chickens and gave two of them to my wife’s parents.’

‘You ate the chickens?’

‘Er, no your Highness. Chickens lay eggs. I bought me a cock at market and...’

‘So, you accepted a payment for your work but still decided to steal the pig.’
Rincewind rubbed his nose again. ‘Ah, well your highness. I be a simple carpenter and don’t think too fast, but I thought over the deal I had made with Old Man Stickler and I decided he had tricked me out of a decent

meal. So I decided to have me that porker he'd promised in the first place. I even took back the four chickens I'd kept and the cock I'd bought...'



'You took back the chickens?'

'Aye, and the cock since I'd given away the other two.'

'To your wife's parents.'

Rincewind nodded.

'Old Man Stickler refused to take them back?'

'No, he took them and left me with nothing for all the work I'd done for him.'

'Why didn't he give you the pig?'

''Cos he said I had given away two of his chickens.'

'I see,' answered Cove. 'So, in the end you decided the only way to get the pig was to steal it?'

'Aye.'

'And you don't deny you stole it?'

'I'm guilty of theft, your Highness. But Old Man Stickler's no innocent either.'

The Sea Witch raised her hand indicating silence and slowly got to her feet. 'I have heard enough, Jeremiah. You are guilty of theft and your punishment will be as follows.'

Rincewind audibly gulped.

'I want you to build Old Man Stickler a new chicken coop as you mentioned his ninth coop was beyond repair.'

'Make him a new 'un?'

'Yes, stealing is a crime and so you will make this coop at your own cost. However, I don't like the fact you had to resort to theft as a result of deceit.' She pointed at the guard by Rincewind's side. 'Take Jeremiah to Old Man Stickler and ensure that Jeremiah has his four chickens and cock returned to him. If those birds have been eaten then allow Jeremiah to take any other four chickens and a cock. If Old Man Stickler is not happy with my decisions then bring him here before me. That is all. You may go.'

'Thank you, your Highness,' chirped Rincewind who was visible relieved that the judgment hadn't been harsher.

As the guard led Rincewind away through the curtained entrance that the adventurers had entered, the second guard brought his clean shaven prisoner forward.

'Lazarus Woodsman,' proclaimed the guard to the seated Se Witch. 'His crime is murder.'

'Which I deny,' barked Woodsman. ''Twas in self defence that I did stab that filthy liar Barnabus Pond.'

The guard clipped Woodsman heavily around the left ear. 'No one gave you permission to speak.'

'Hush now, cooed the Sea Witch. 'Let us hear Lazarus account why he stands here before me accused of murder.'

'It's a conspiracy, your Highness.'

'Isn't it always,' Cove's reply was a whisper and yet the golden mask augmented the utterance for the whole room to hear.' Pray, continue Lazarus.'

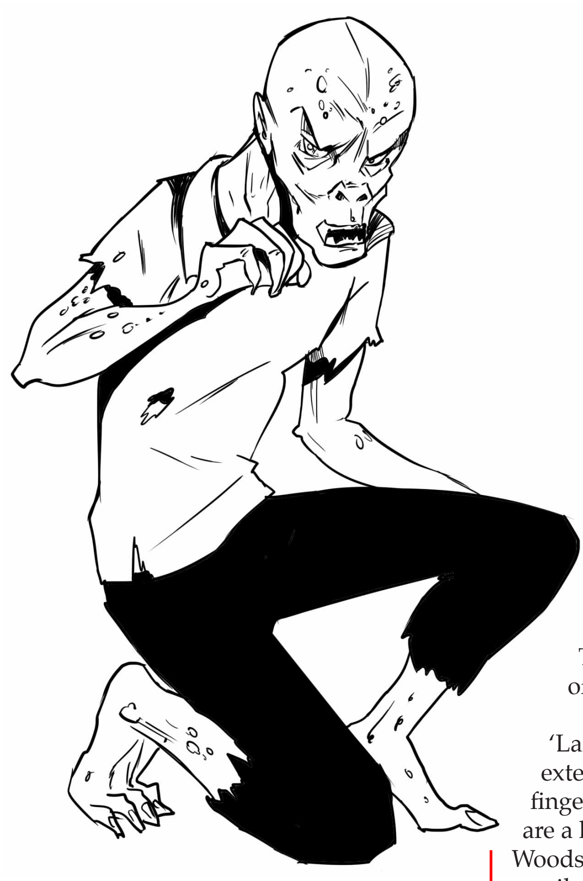
'Well, your Highness. It's a long story which begins...'

'Justice cannot sit idly by to hear a tale spun out in excessive detail.' Cove leaned forward and raised a finger in emphasis of the point she was about to make. 'The facts that led you to stand here in the Chamber of Judgement accused of a heinous crime.'

Woodsman slowly licked his dry lips and narrowed his eyes as his mind tried to focus on what he was going to say next. 'A fisherman named Barnabus Pond promised his daughter to me when she came of age.'

'To be your wife?'

'Aye, but the wiley son of whore tried to cheat me.'



'He didn't give you his daughter when she turned fifteen?'

'Aye, that's what happened.'

'What was the reason for his refusal?'

Woodsman gave a derisive snort. 'There's the rub, your Highness. He wasn't going to give me his first daughter who has just turned fifteen. He wanted me to have his second daughter who's thirteen and... and a simpleton.'

'So your agreement on which daughter you would take as a bride was never witnessed by anyone else?'

Woodsman nodded in agreement with the Sea Witch's statement.

'So what you led to murder him?'

''Twasn't murder,'raged Woodsman 'I challenged him to a duel and before our swords were drawn he tried to stab me in the back with a dagger. I managed to get a hold of that dagger and I killed him with it, but it was no murder.'

'There are no witnesses,' informed the guard 'and the victim was found with the dagger lodged between his shoulder blades.'

'We wrestled with the dagger,' explained Woodsman 'and as we rolled on the ground I lashed out with the blade.'

'Are you certain what you tell me is the truth?' As Cove spoke there was an air of menace in her voice.

''Tis the truth I speak, your Highness. I swear by all that is holy and righteous.'

'Holy and righteous?' The Sea Witch repeated as she rose to her feet. 'Holy and righteous?' The golden mask tipped backwards slightly and the room was filled by the raucous laughter of Cove. The adventurers exchanged glances of confusion.

'Lazarus Woodsman,' the Sea Witch extended her right hand and pointed a finger straight at the chained man. 'You are a liar and a murderer!' Woodsman raised a fist and waved it angrily in the Sea Witch's direction. 'I tells you I am not!"

Cove's extended hand contracted into a fist and a ball of red light engulfed it.

'Whoa,' whispered Noakes.

The Sea Witch opened her hand, palm upwards and sitting in the middle of her hand was grapefruit sized ball of red light. 'Behold,' boomed Cove, 'the truth.' She casually tossed the ball of light over her shoulder which shot up and burst against the white canvas.

The red light spread across the canvas like ripples in a pond in which a stone had landed. Moments later the canvas showed a picture perfect image of a clearing in a forest. Woodsman could be seen and in front of him walked another man who Raven surmised was the murdered Barnabus Pond. Both men held swords but as those assembled in the Chamber of Judgement watched the flashback of history, Pond never attacked Woodsman. Instead the moving image showed Woodsman draw a dagger from his left boot, rush forward and plunge the dagger deep into the back of Pond between his shoulder blades.

The image dispersed in a flash of red light.

'Lies, you Witch' cried Woodsman. 'That's not how it happened...'

'Silence!' screamed the Sea Witch. 'I could smell the lies on every word you spat from your accursed mouth. The moving canvas revealed what was and what will always be. You stabbed Barnabus Pond in the back and in so doing you have given up your own life.'

'No!'

'As the covenant says "It is an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life."'

Woodsman was getting visible agitated, but he had little time to do anything as the guard next to him suddenly kneed him in the back of his knee forcing him to the ground.

'The punishment for murder,' continued Cove 'is death.'

Electrical green energy shot out of the eye pieces of the golden mask that the Sea Witch was wearing and struck the eyes of Woodsman.

Orchid was ready to dash forward towards Cove, but the Sea Witch waved her right hand in the Amazon's direction and the warrior woman was catapulted backwards and knocked out cold against the stone wall. None of the other rescuers made a move for they were transfixed by the transformation of Woodsman before them.

The man's flesh was turning a sickly grey colour and his human features were becoming more bestial. The prisoner's fingers become talons and his hair fell upon the floor. As all this happened to his body, from Woodsman's throat came a gurgling sound which didn't sound remotely human.

The electrical green energy attack ceased.

Crouched on the floor was some kind of inhuman ghoul.

The Sea Witch pointed her left hand towards the ceiling and the chain that was affixed to the trapdoor started to pull upwards, raising the trapdoor open. With a sweep of her right hand the ghoul skirted across the floor and into the hole the trapdoor revealed, as it disappeared from view it gave a bestial howl of fear. The Sea Witch's left hand clenched into a fist and the chain slackened forcing the trapdoor shut with a resounding boom.

TO BE CONTINUED

Fighting Fantasy Collector

Fightingfantasycollector.co.uk

The Warlock of the official website, and well-known collector of *Fighting Fantasy* materials, relates his comings and goings as the anniversary year came to an end...

by JAMIE FRY

Between my writing this column for the 10th *Fantazine* and its publication, a whirlwind of activity was bestowed upon me at the end of 2012. Back to back came the Kickstarter documentary *Turn to 400*, Indiecon, and Dragonmeet, followed swiftly by another Kickstarter for *You are the Hero*.

Turn to 400 is a documentary film which tells the story of *Fighting Fantasy*. MmBroadcast (Sean Riley) used Kickstarter to raise the funding. The campaign began on Halloween, 31st October, 2012 and ended on 30th November, 2012. They needed to raise a whopping £40,000 to get started.

Sadly, the project did not get funded despite all the efforts of Sean Riley and those who supported it. Just over £15,000 of the original target was funded and we are awaiting news as to what the next move is regarding this. Through the campaign I managed to secure a flyer and t-shirt for my collection. I very much hope this project will be re-considered.

Through my travels on the internet searching for news, conducting my usual research, I came across an event in my locality called 'Indiecon' (9~11 November 2012). It wasn't very well advertised through social media and subsequently not on my radar until the last minute when it was literally the next week.

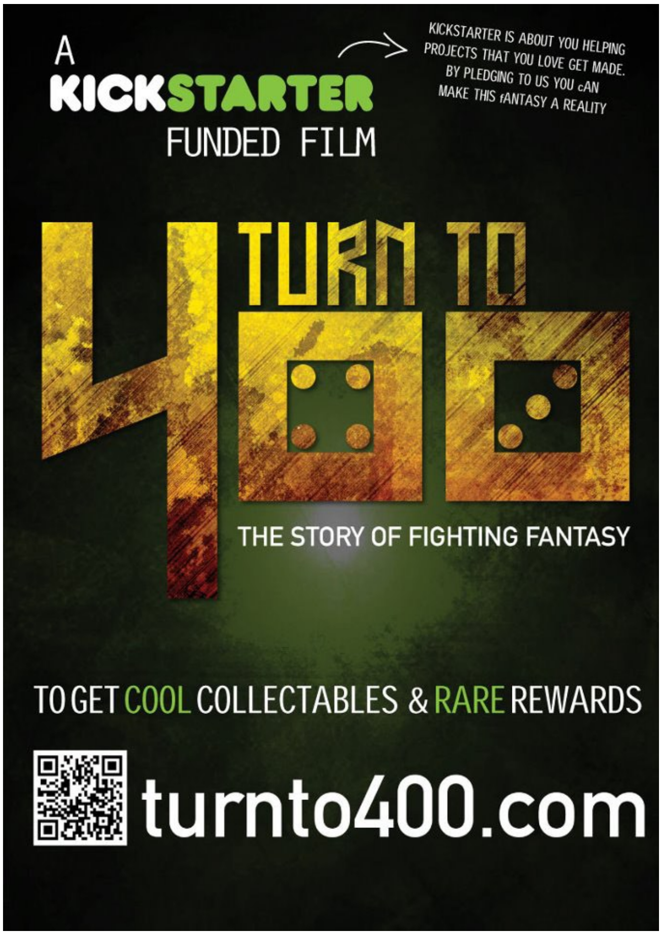
My discovery led me to Jamie Wallis of Greywood Publishing, the gentleman responsible for the Myriador d20 adaptations of *Fighting Fantasy*. He informed he was attending under the Greywood banner, but was also there selling original artwork by *Fighting Fantasy* artist Martin Mckenna. How could I resist!

I headed over to meet Jamie and only just caught him before he left. The original illustrations (in blank ink on A4) were all mainly from *Legend of Zagor* and *Curse of the Mummy*, but Jonathan Green had snaffled most of the latter already.

The beauty I parted with my cash for was the Hellhorn Champion from paragraph 223 of *Legend of Zagor*. Zagor himself had already gone. Thanks to Jamie though, as I also walked away with the remaining few d20 *Fighting Fantasy* booklets I still needed.

At Dragonmeet 2012 in December I got the chance to run a stand selling books in the name of the *Fighting Fantasy* brand on behalf of Icon Books. With additional display material borrowed from Tin Man Games, I put on a damn good display for the cause.

I even had the Tin Man Games iPad stand which allowed people to play the newly-released *Blood of the Zombies* iOS gamebook whilst queuing to get books signed by Steve and Ian. With my son helping me run the stand I sold over 90 books, 36 of which were *Blood of the Zombies*. My sales included a range of new and old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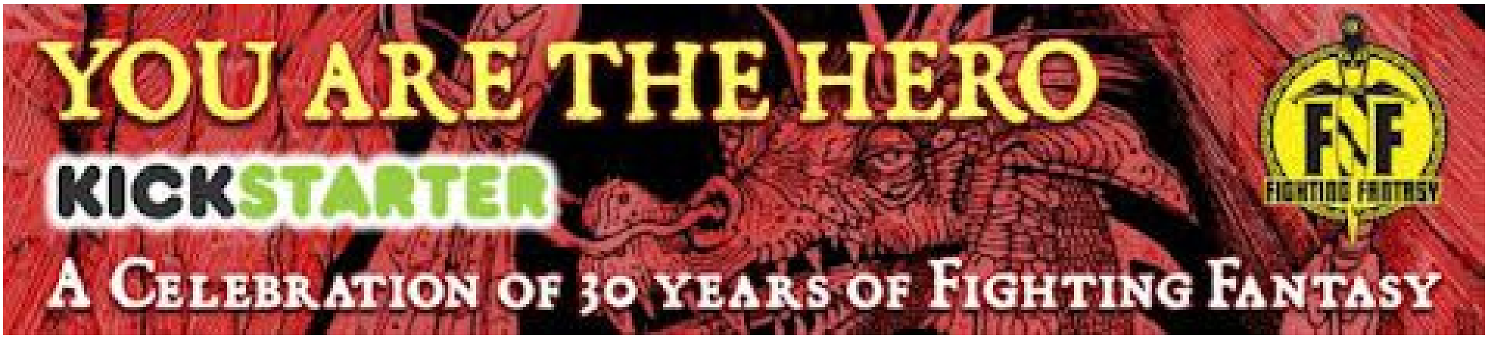
YOU ARE THE HERO
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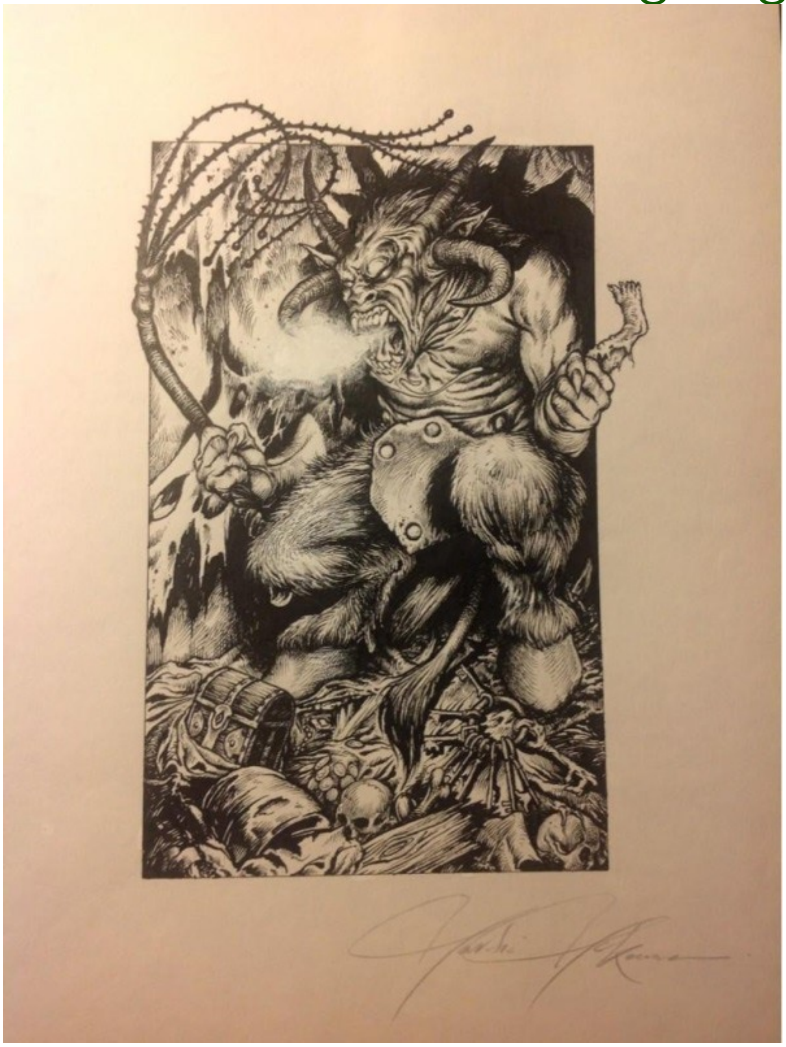


stock, some from Icon and books I keep for sale. Uber fan Olivier Manso bought a good 20 of them from me, mostly foreign titles of which I still have copies available.

I was joined by Ian and Steve after their hour long talk and whilst they signed and chatted I administered the queue of fans for well over an hour. Those who bought *Blood of Zombies* also got a free signed poster of the book cover (myself included of course!).

The tables were also covered in the *Blood of the Zombies* flyers from Icon and a bunch of postcards donated by Tin Man Games also took pride of place. The *House of Hell* one, as you have become to expect, is now tucked away safely in my collection.

Neil Rennison of Tin Man Games, author Jonathan Green, artist Tony Hough and Graham Bottley all stopped by the stand to say hello. As usual it was a pleasure to hear all the stories the fans were sharing and without them, as I keep repeating, *Fighting Fantasy* would have been long gone. All in all it was a very successful end to the 30th Anniversary year.

Meanwhile, at Dragonmeet it was announced that Jonathan Green would be starting his own Kickstarter project. He launched the campaign between 7th December, 2012 and 6th January, 2013 to fund a book he called *The History of Fighting Fantasy*, which at the time was given the working title of *You are the Hero*.

This is an exciting project and I am sure we are all looking forward to this and seeing the fruits of his labour sometime late this year. The book was funded, going well over the £15,000 target, and the ever ambitious Jon set a late stretch target of £23,000 to turn the book into a hardback release. However, the kickstarter finally ended at £21,421, meaning that the hardback version may not be realised. This is certainly something I would like to see happen, if not, I can't wait for the dice, pencil, eraser and badge anyway.

In the far reaching parts of the printed and digital *Fighting Fantasy* universe other goodies have become available or in the making.

Heroes Companion is out by Arion Games (Graham Bottley) to enhance the *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* series. Fingers crossed we get the Indigogo funded *Blacksand!* through soon. Not far away is the eagerly awaited *Sorcey!* app by Inkle and Tin Man Games next instalment will be *Forest of Doom*.

Just under a year later, since winning 'The Something Unreal' event at 'The Gadget Show Live', Commando Kiwi has finally released *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain: Lost Chapters* on the iOS platform.

Fellow competitors Indigo Jam have also released *Deathtrap Dungeon*. However, the intention to release on iOS didn't work out and they have released it onto PC instead. The download is available from their website.

Derp Studios however had already released *Citadel of Chaos: Dire Consequences* on iOS last year. Digital Mage have yet to release *Armies of Death: Rise of Agglax* at the time of writing this. These are not be confused with any digital (original) gamebook adaptions being released by Tin Man Games.

And finally I am now the lucky owner of two original Fighting Fantasy manuscripts I bought from Jonathan Green. The first is *Night of the Necromancer* and the second *Howl of the Werewolf*. They also contain publisher notes which give a nice insight into some of the changes made during editing.

Next job is to update and release my price guide and checklist for 2013.

DRAGONMEET 2012

Everything I Need to Know I Learnt from Playing Fighting Fantasy RPG Adventures

Swap your adventurer's sword for a GamesMaster's mantle to send teams of hapless Dungeoneers through the *Fighting Fantasy* RPG and *AFF* scenarios in search of the non-financial treasures.

---

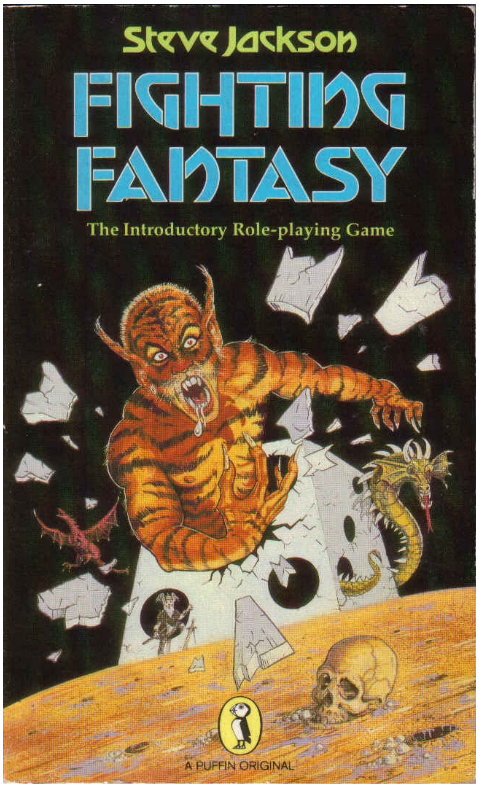
by ED JOLLEY

There's more to *Fighting Fantasy* than just the gamebooks. In various forms, the *Fighting Fantasy* role-playing game has been around since before spines went green, allowing whole groups of players to *Test their Luck*, right wrongs across Titan, find interesting new ways of dying horribly, and just possibly pick up a thing or two that might be of help in facing the challenges of everyday life.

Fighting Fantasy – The Introductory Role-playing Game

The Wishing Well

The notes on the first 'room' in the adventure include a reminder that the heroes will need to have left themselves a means by which to leave the well when they've finished. Newcomers to role-playing might consider this a waste of ink, as the way the party entered the well is still going to be there unless the players come up with a deliberate, ingenious and suicidally wrong-headed plan to get rid of it. RPG veterans, by contrast, will know that that is precisely why the reminder needs to be there. Not that all players' plans are deliberate, ingenious and suicidally wrong-headed: a lot of them miss out the 'ingenious' bit.



Moral: Never underestimate people's capability for making things unnecessarily difficult for themselves.

Shaggradd's Hives of Peril

Whatever the players expect to happen in the Fantasy Room will happen. If they expect all the chests to be booby-trapped, the chests will be booby-trapped. If they expect that the stuffed animals will come to life and attack them, the stuffed animals will come to life and attack them. If they expect anything pleasant, beneficial, or useful to take place while they're in the room… contact the Guinness Book of Records. Players who don't automatically expect the worst are rarer than fans of *Sky Lord*.

Moral: A positive outlook can be good for you.

The Riddling Reaver

The Curse of Kallamehr

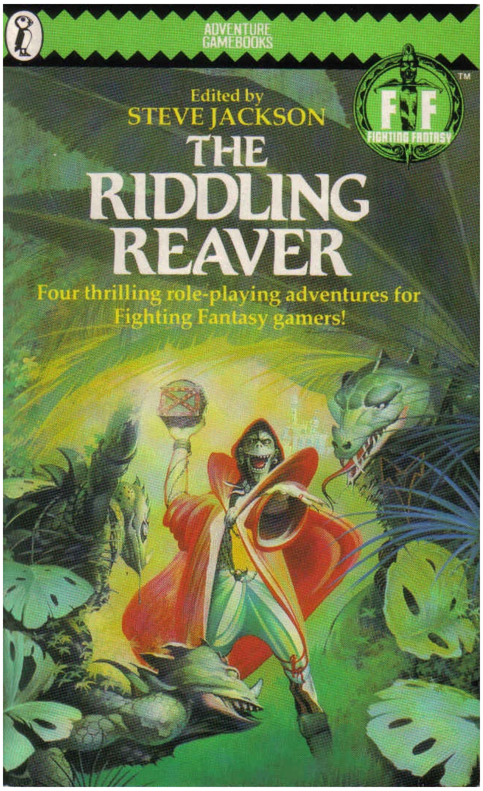
The moment the adventurers reach the top of Rangor Tower, they see the Riddling Reaver pushing Baron Bluestone over the edge. Regardless of whether they rushed up there as quickly as possible, tried to hurry but got delayed, or even wasted time attempting to interrogate a corpse, trying to open the puzzle box or solving the half-dozen riddles contained within it, they arrive just in time to see the Baron thrown to his death. It's almost as if the Reaver deliberately delayed the fatal shove until he had a suitable audience. Then again, if he had orchestrated the killing like that, you'd expect him to follow it up with a sub-Schwarzenegger pun about the Baron being an over-the-top character or dropping in on his subjects, so maybe the writers just favoured spectacle over realism.

Moral: Timing is an important aspect of comedy – even for tasteless and unpleasant jokes.

Voyage of Enigma

The Reaver's ship, the *Twice Shy*, is steered by means of sympathetic magic. If, while travelling on it, the adventurers should come across the map and model ship that are the key components of the spell, they could easily wind up making things very unpleasant for themselves. But even if they do resist the urge to poke and prod at the model, they could still wind up dooming themselves if they disturb the Jib-Jib that's asleep on the map. Yes, a Jib-Jib: the weakest, most unthreatening creature in all *Out of the Pit*, has the potential to wipe out the whole party. It'd be like having all Napoleon's armies defeated by a Chihuahua. Only more embarrassing.

Moral: Under the right conditions, even the most unlikely opponent can prove a threat.



The Pendulum of Fate

The Reaver's nefarious scheme is revealed to be: 1) Make enemies. 2) Lure enemies to jungle, then use disguise and Lizard Man servants to trick enemies into stealing Pendulum from shrine I am magically barred from entering. 3) Steal Pendulum from enemies. 4) Use Pendulum to plunge world into Primal Chaos. You don't exactly need to be a tactical genius to spot that it's rather less than perfect. Some might argue that the plan is ultimately thwarted as the result of its lacking a 3a) Prevent enemies from following me back to my lair and interfering with final phase, but the more perceptive will note that phases 1~3 could have been simplified to: 1) Send Lizard Man servants to steal Pendulum from shrine I am magically barred from entering. That way, there'd be no enemies needing to be kept out of the way for the final phase. Also, the list would be shorter, saving on paper and ink. Hey, even an agent of the Trickster Gods of Luck and Chance is going to have a budget.

Moral: Double-check your plans to see if there are any unnecessary complications you could do without.

The Realm of Entropy

To ensure that no intruders get into his laboratory, the Reaver has a magically locked door that refuses to open unless it sees his face. It's not Titan's worst security system, but it has its drawbacks. For starters, the Reaver regularly uses disguises, and it must get tiresome to keep having to put the right face back on before the door will let him in. More seriously, half of the rooms outside the laboratory in the Reaver's home contain life-sized replicas of their owner to make the place feel more lived-in, and the door's not smart enough to distinguish between the real Reaver and a dummy. It's almost as rubbish a set-up as that house in Port Blacksand where the spare key is in the kennel right next to the front door.

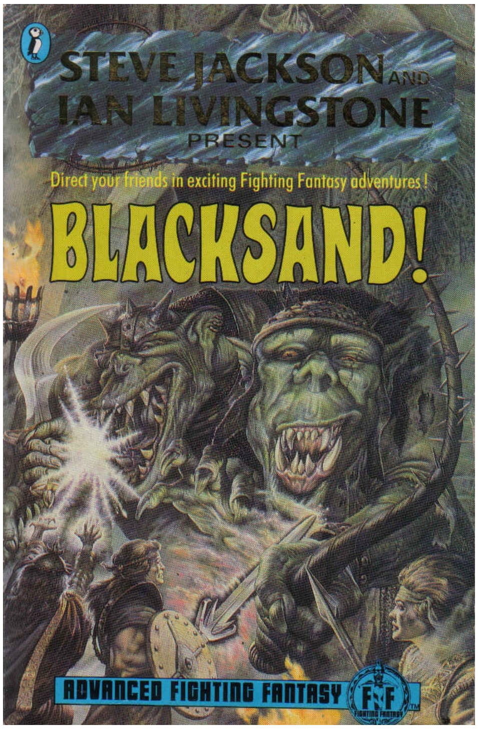
Moral: Don't leave clues to your password in plain sight right next to the computer.

Dungeoneer

Tower of the Sorcerer

Right at the end of the adventure, a manifestation of Xortan Throg turns up and gloats about how the heroes only killed a replica of him, and the real Throg is safe and secure and plotting revenge. While I get that, after suffering a setback, it can be good to do something to boost your morale, it's not as if, "I ran away, so you only killed my associate and rescued my prisoner," is much of a boast. Besides, this display reveals to the adventurers that Throg still needs to be dealt with, enabling them to start seeking him before he's ready to take action against them. When you're secretly plotting to raise an army of undead to conquer the world, isn't the element of surprise more valuable than the satisfaction of getting to go, "Ha ha! Fooled you!"?

Moral: Sometimes you're better off just keeping your mouth shut.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Revenge of the Sorcerer

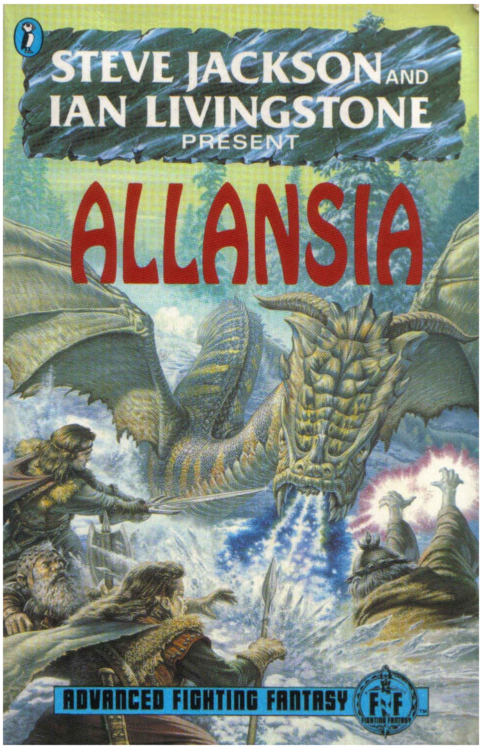
In the course of this adventure, the heroes may well wind up 'liberating' a couple of items from the Temple of Hydana. While Hydana will take action if they attempt to pilfer the temple's gold, he won't mind if they only take what they actually came for, in part because it's 'to be used for a good purpose'. Which is a bit of an odd way to view it when you consider that the adventurers are being duped into resurrecting the evil wizard Sargon, who will go on to be the villain behind every subsequent official *AFF* scenario. Then again, Sargon is going to help them defeat a different evil wizard who's up to no good just down the tunnel from the temple, and whatever foul schemes Sargon gets up to afterwards will take place on dry land, away from Hydana's realm, so they'll be someone else's problem.

Moral: You're more likely to get the cooperation of those in power when they can see how they'll benefit from your plan.

Blacksand!

A Shadow Over Blacksand

Brass the merchant unwittingly supplied the materials for the Brass Golem. The priests of Elim constructed the Golem. Sargon manufactured the two components necessary for animating it. The High Priest casts the spell to bring it to life. And who gets held responsible when the Golem goes on a Godzilla-style rampage in Blacksand? The heroes who encounter it in the course of an only tenuously related quest, and have to subdue it to save the city. Adventuring can be a worse-than-thankless profession.



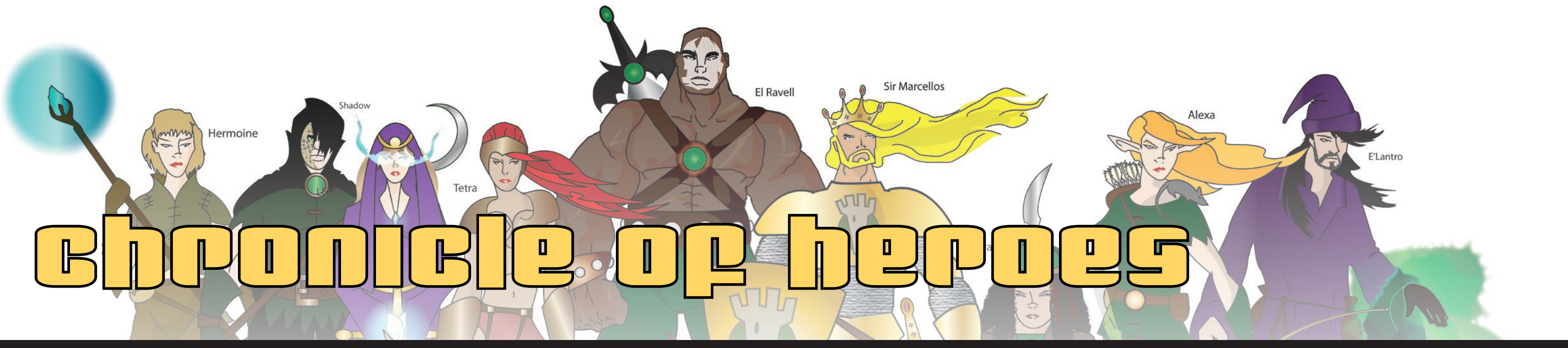
Moral: Try to find out the facts before you start laying blame, because sometimes the apparent culprit is just an innocent bystander who wound up in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Allansia

A Darkness Over Kaad

Sargon fears the Staff of Ashra, and raises an army against Kaad in the hope of finding and destroying it. It's not there. But, quite without meaning to, the adventurers seeking to save the people of Kaad manage to find the exiles who actually have the Staff, and inspire them to bring it to Kaad to aid in the city's defence. It'd still be in the swamp, doing next to nothing, if he hadn't been so keen to get rid of it. Somehow I doubt that he appreciates the irony.

Moral: You'll save yourself a lot of trouble if you can distinguish between the times when you need to take action and the occasions on which it's best not to get involved.



chronicle of heroes

THIS ISSUE CAVERNS OF THE SNOW WITCH (Myriador d20 Module)

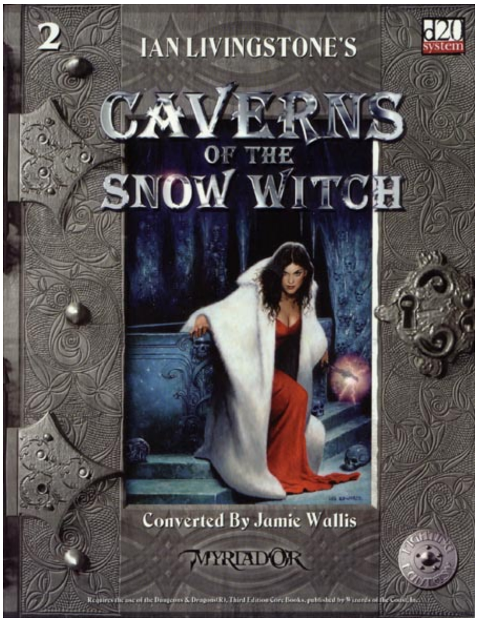
an account of a Fighting Fantasy RPG campaign played over 3 four-hour sessions, by ADRIAN YOUNG
Art by ROBERTSON SONDOH JR.

THE FROZEN NORTH!

Once again it was time for our Heroes set out on a new adventure. The team consisted of that most experienced of campaigners El Ravager, his new trusty half-wolf Timtoby 2, the party's leading lady Tetra, Sir Marcellos (perhaps-you've-heard-of-him), the Dwarf with anger management issues Silverarm, and the newest member of the team, the bridge-fetish assassin 99. Together they were helping an old friend Big Jim by protecting his caravans as he traded with outposts along the Icefinger Mountain range. But soon, bigger things were in store for our brave heroes!

An ABOMINABLE BEAST was threatening the trade route. The creature had already laid ruin to one outpost and six Northmen. Big Jim asked the adventurers to ascend into the Icefinger Mountains to slay the beast! Ravager and Silverarm negotiated the fee for their services (mercenaries!) and then it was into the frozen wastelands. The howling wind and snow chilled our Heroes and made the going tough. An encounter with a huge MAMMOTH saw all but Silverarm get thrown around like rag dolls! 99 had to use all her assassin's agility to stop from being hurled over the edge and into a crevasse while Timtoby 2's adventure ended abruptly when he was squashed by the Mammoth. Finally, the combined attacks of Ravager, Tetra and finally Marcellos ended the behemoth's rampage.

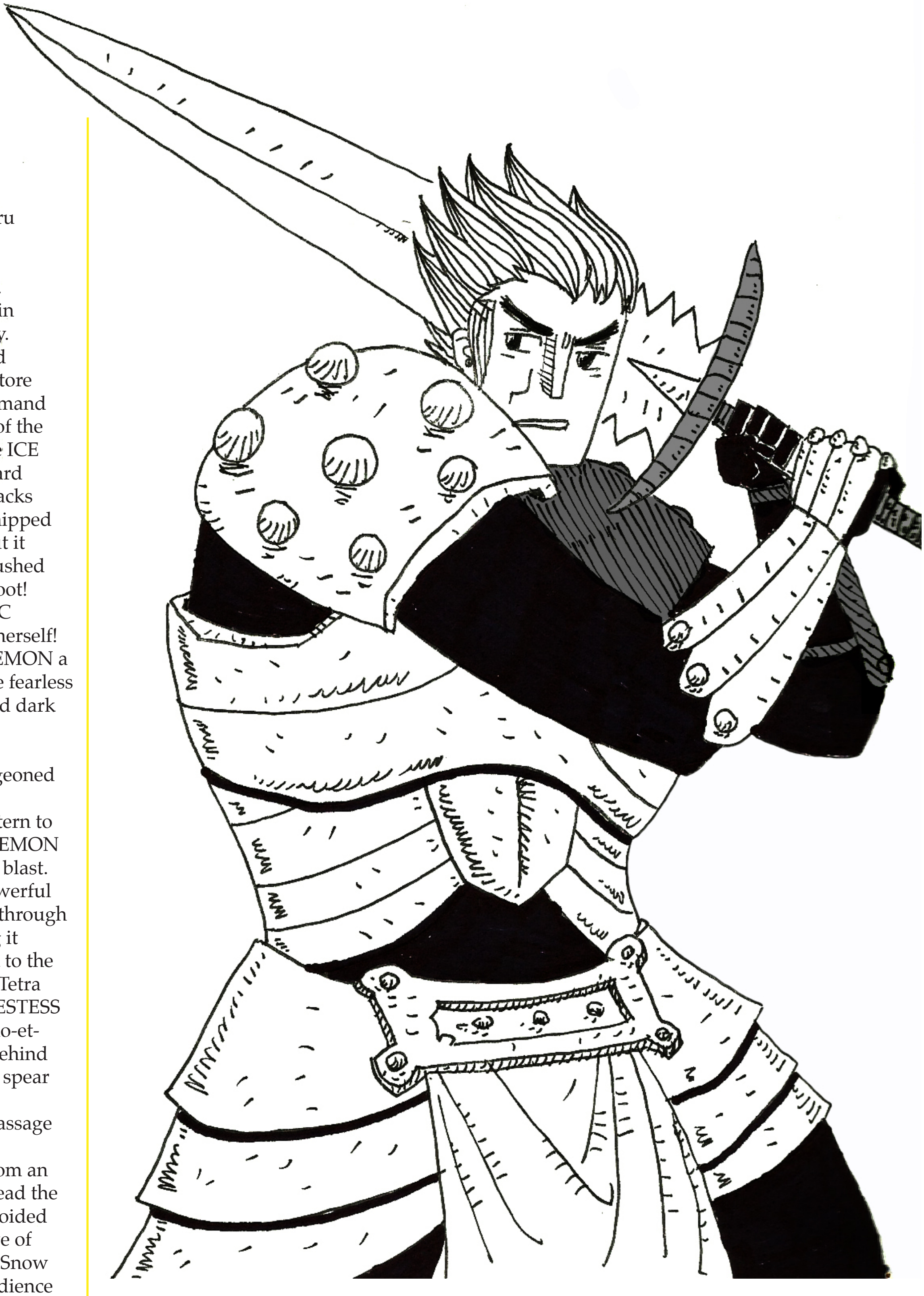
The team settled down for some minor healing, Rav buried what was left of Timtoby 2, and then Rav and Marcellos cut a few steaks off the dead MAMMOTH for food supplies. The impatient Silverarm left her human companions to recon the other side of a crevasse that could only be crossed by a slippery ice bridge. But the Dwarf soon fell foul of murderous SNOW WOLVES who ambushed her in a blood-curled frenzy. Luckily, Tetra's eagle eye spotted the massacre and she alerted the others. With Silverarm fighting for her life, Tetra performed a heroic action by sliding all the way across the ice bridge in one turn, and coming to the dwarven Guardian's aide. 99 also crossed the ice bridge, but much more slowly, as she enjoyed the feel of its cold surface and marvelled at the bridge's amazing ice construction. Eventually, Tetra's blade, Silverarm's warhammer and 99's Charm Wand put an end to the SNOW WOLVES, and the party continued up the mountain.



A blizzard hit and the heroes were forced to find cover, and they fortunately happened upon an empty cabin. The cabin belonged to a Fur-trapper named Brogan. After helping themselves to a hearty stew meal beside the warm fire, Rav read them a letter he had found. It was the story of Brogan's quest to rid the world of a Snow Witch who planned an Ice Age for Allansia – a story that nearly put Silverarm to sleep as she lay curled up in the trapper's bed. When the blizzard passed, the party headed on. An avalanche made the party run for their lives – except for Silverarm. The dwarven cleric simply stood firm in the face of the natural disaster and put all her faith in Throff and her Stonewall scroll. As the others held their breath, the magic wall held, and our little stubby-legged Heroine was safe! Eventually their journey led them to their prey - the abominable YETI. The Heroes found the creature towering over the fur trapper Brogan. The YETI had already killing six Northmen, and did likewise to Brogan in one foul clawed swoop – right before their very eyes. Rav thrust his newfound spear into the white beast, the joined Tetra in a melee against the massive white creature. Finally Silverarm flanked the Yeti and cast a very powerful Holy Spear, which tore the Yeti's head off! 99 comforted the fallen Brogan. She listened compassionately to his last words "Snow Witch... must stop... Ice Age" – before stripping Brogan of all his clothes and possessions, including a magical Rope of Climbing (no respect!).

After more tortuous climbing, the party found the hidden entrance to the Snow Witch's Crystal Caverns. Tetra and 99 lit their lanterns as Rav lanced a patrolling ELF with his spear – before interrogating the wounded guard. The adventurers garnered information about the icy Caverns and the magical Neckbands that the Snow Witch's minions wore that subjected them to slavery! Any hope that the heroes would try and move through the ice caverns covertly were soon dashed when the party stormed a makeshift kitchen. Tetra and Marcellos slashed a dim-witted NEANDERTHAL to death, while Rav had a good ol' fashioned punch on with the angry cook! Silverarm was focussed on eating the tasty stew that was on offer, but soon became embroiled with 99 in a battle against some pesky GOBLINS. Marcellos rekindled some memories of his time as Goblin-king with one of the GOBLINS before Rav skewered the last of them with his sword! With the Snow Witch now sure to know of trouble in paradise, the Heroes moved deeper into the mountain, arriving at a cavernous temple. It was filled with a dozen assorted creatures praying to the effigy of some large DEMON. As Tetra and Marcellos tried to bypass the gathered crowd, an ORC PRIESTESS yelled out "Who dares pass through the Temple of T'Armeru without paying their respects?"

Ravager wasted no time hurling his Spear into the angry PRIESTESS. Then he joined Tetra and Silverarm in belting her GOBLIN and ORC clergy. But as the battle raged, the wounded ORC-PRIESTESS had a surprise in store for our heroes. With an ancient command she brought the towering ice effigy of the DEMON T'Armeru to life! The huge ICE DEMON roared and bounded forward into the battle. Silverarm's Mind attacks appeared to have no effect. Tetra whipped an ORC into the DEMON'S path, but it was promptly encased in ice and crushed beneath the DEMON'S monstrous foot! Tetra then threw a dagger at the ORC PRIESTESS who was trying to heal herself! Doh! However, this gave the ICE DEMON a chance to attack Tetra and forced the fearless heroine to retreat down an uncharted dark passage as the DEMON closed in. Ravager had his hands full with the remaining ORCS as Silverarm bludgeoned the last of the GOBLINS with her Warhammer. Just as Tetra lit her lantern to see where she had run to, the ICE DEMON prepared to seal her fate with an icy blast. Enter the Silverarm – who cast a powerful Holy Spear force bolt which ripped through the back of the Ice Demon – sending it collapsing into tiny shards and back to the unholy abyss from whence it came. Tetra then took on the cornered ORC PRIESTESS in a bit of sword versus dagger mono-et-mono, only to have Ravager creep behind and skewer the PRIESTESS with his spear (spoil sport).



The team then investigated the passage Tetra had run into earlier. Ravager unearthed a magical White Spear from an icy pool of water in the cave. Tetra lead the party on (as usual) and narrowly avoided a pit trap. Then they entered the cave of Rillion, a BARD who welcomed the Snow Queen's new recruits (= placed Obedience Collars on them). Rav introduced his fellow heroes as Jack, Jill and Leia, then promptly gave Rillion his own warrior welcome by smacking Rillion in the nose, pinning him down in a choke lock and head-butting him to a pulp. Then Tetra wrapped her whip around Rillion's neck and Silverarm added emotional insults saying "Rillion was good looking for a human". Rav then broke some of the hapless Bard's fingers and rammed the BARD'S bloodied head into a vase. Hmmmmmmm. With the interrogation(?) complete, the party continued their search for the Snow Queen and soon the icy crystal caverns were replaced by the hard rock of the Icefinger Mountain.

The heroes rescued a dwarf named Ulgrad who had fallen into a pit and was being pelted by small boulders thrown by a group of GOBLINS. Ulgrad was in awe of meeting "the Great Silverarm" and bestowed upon her a magical Slingshot and some metal slugs, warning her to "Beware the White Rat." Moving on, the Heroes came upon a Skull Entrance cut into the rock. It was guarded by a disfigured and meek-looking robed figure named YORGAR, who held a clear Prism. Silverarm whipped a metal slug at him and Tetra threw a dagger. Both hit their mark, forcing YORGAR to drop the prism and fall to the ground. Silverarm grabbed the Prism of Illusion while Rav used his Elven Boots of Speed to get into hand-to-hand range. YORGAR retaliated by firing a burst of White Fire that nearly hit Rav! Suddenly, Rav's mind was filled with a traumatic flashback. Images of his homeland and the terrible atrocity that occurred came flooding back. And in an instant Rav realised that YORGAR was THAT sorceror! With Rav's horrible facial scars as a permanent reminder of that fateful day, Rav slashed through YORGAR'S body again and again – finally avenging the death of his family and the destruction of his village. The other Heroes watched on in silence.

A FROST GIANT wielding a Great Axe was encountered next, and although quite a worthy opponent, it was still no match for the Tetra-Rav show. Silverarm continued her good run by collecting a magic Ring of Cold Protection and Ring of Summon Warrior. Unfortunately, she also put on a Cursed Ring that couldn't be removed. This was the second time in her career that she had adorned a Cursed Item – and although the ring had no immediate negative effect, it conjured an image of a Vampire in her mind (a sign of things to come?). After Silverarm sling-shot another one of her magical metal balls to shatter a CRYSTAL WARRIOR, and the heroes dispensed of a ZOMBIE, they came upon a high ceiling cavern with ornate carvings in the walls. Inside was an open sarcophagus – from which a White Rat promptly dropped out of.

As the Heroes discussed their course of action, the Rat began to transform. Rav threw Silverarm's Dagger of Throff at it, while Silverarm launched the last of her magical balls. But these attacks did little as the Rat transformed into a menacing adult WHITE DRAGON. It fanned its huge wings in the air and wailed a piercing screech. Rav gave it his best shot by hurling his spear and following up with his Lightning Rune. Tetra tried to flank the magnificent being, while Silverarm used her Ring of Warrior Summoning to summon the armoured knight Aragose. The DRAGON smashed Aragose aside and spewed a punishing Breathe of Ice onto Rav and Tetra. But just when it looked as though another icy blast was going to finish off our heroes, Silverarm cast another powerful Holy Spear, which tore through the DRAGON'S heart, sending it crashing to the cavern floor.

The heroes had but a few moments to begin healing and recuperating, when a beautiful woman emerged from the sarcophagus. It was SHAREELLA – the Snow Witch herself! She laughed maniacally, adding "no-one can stop me from bringing an Ice Age to all of Allansia. Intruders – you will join me or my Caverns will be your Tomb!" Silverarm's Cursed Ring was a Vampire Curse that made its bearer a servant of any Vampires within 50 feet. Luckily, Silverarm also possessed a Ring of Mind Protection which counteracted the Cursed ring. Aragose charged at SHAREELLA, successfully wounding her and sending her screaming and flying into a high corner of the Cavern. The Snow Witch's eyes burned red – her fangs grew in anticipation of the kill. The Witch was too high for Aragose to hit with his sword. Tetra turned invisible, awaiting SHAREELLA'S attack. Rav, back to full strength from a Potion of Healing, readied his black-bladed Sword of the Bat. Silverarm, nearly depleted of all her magical energy, stood exhausted in the doorway. Would this be the final climatic battle?

Sir Marcellos and 99 arrived in time to hear SHAREELLA scream her warning "Lower your weapons and surrender to me, or you will all die!" 99 immediately readied her Arrow of Undead Slaying as Tetra remained invisible and investigated the sarcophagus where she found a cryptic scroll. Ravager tried to trick the Snow Witch by saying "We will bow before you and become your servants". Silverarm called off Aragose the Defender as the Snow Witch hovered eerily towards Ravager. Ravager knelt before her as SHAREELLA tried to Charm him with a spell. Tetra snuck behind SHAREELLA in the false belief that the Scroll she found gave her power over the Snow Witch – only to have that theory dispelled by being blasted away by SHAREELLA'S Chilling Circle of Aura. Silverarm summoned Aragose to attack again, but this time SHAREELLA'S Ice Fist landed truly and killed the Warrior. Silverarm cast a copy of SHAREELLA with her Prism of Illusion. SHAREELLA became infuriated and this gave 99 the opportunity to fire the Slaying Arrow. It lodged into the real Snow Witch, paralysing her and sending her slumping to the floor. Rav then charged forward, wasting no time cleaving the Witch's head clean off!

The Snow Witch's physical being was destroyed, but unbeknown to the Heroes her spirit returned to the sarcophagus to regenerate its powers. The adventurers began recuperating and searching the cavern while Silverarm decided to leave through the main doors. Suddenly, the passage walls began to collapse! Silverarm retreated back into the cavern, as did Rav, who had begun to try and outrun the avalanche using his Elven Boots of Speed, but then changed his mind and remained with his companions. Two prisoners of the Snow Witch successfully dashed from the collapsing area - Redswift (an Elf from the Moonstone Hills) and Stubb (a Dwarf from the village of Stonebridge). With their Collars of Obedience irremovable but no longer enslaving them - the two were accepted by the Heroes and would travel together with them. Stubb was particularly stoked to meet the great dwarven cleric Silverarm, and remained by her side. Redswift led the group out of the cavern after Tetra discovered an Illusionary Wall. However, tensions between the veteran Heroes and their new party members soon flared.

Tetra took exception with Redswift wanting to keep a glass prism that was found in Shareella's cavern. And Stubb was very defensive of his Elven friend. 99 did her best to extend an olive branch while Marcellos threw them a scrap of provisions here and there. Stubb got poisoned trying to open a serpent carved Iron Casket, while Rav found another pair of Elven Boots of Speed – and in spite of Redswift's protests – handed them to Marcellos. Stubb was shocked by Silverarm's lack of caring (and quickly lost faith in the legend), and despite a prickly dwarven kiss from the cleric, Stubb decided to travel next to Redswift instead. Tetra then released a bit of her frustration by belting the crap out of a NEANDERTHAL and Marcellos bagged a strange star-shaped metal disc. Redswift and Stubb fell foul of a tentacled BRAIN SLAYER, which promptly drained them of more Stamina and some of their abilities. 99 used her Stealth to hide amongst the glowing purple walls as Rav hacked the BRAIN SLAYER to death. 99 found a Scroll of Protection Against Elements and another strange shaped disc, ignoring the incessant protests from Redswift about sharing and fairness. Unfortunately, Rav wasn't as tolerant, and dealt the arrogant Elf a firm back-hander, but Redswift did not take it lying down. The Elf drew his dagger and cut into the unarmed Rav thrice! Stubb called a stop to this nonsense, as the others watched on, only to have Rav dishonourably punch Redswift as the Elf bowed before him in apology! No honour!

As they ventured further, Redswift couldn't help himself and grabbed an ornate Dagger they came upon, only to have it attack him! Stubb and Rav helped stave off the magical dagger, and Redswift and Rav were friends again. Unfortunately, Redswift didn't return the favour when an AIR ELEMENTAL began pummelling into Rav who had inadvertently released it from an enchanted shield! It was left to 99 to save Rav by casting a Protection Scroll against the furious ELEMENTAL. And just when you thought the adventurers had gotten the message about not touching anything, Tetra unfurled a Parchment pinned to a door. It was a Death Spell – one of the rarest and most powerful of evil runes. The SNOW WITCH had placed it in her Caverns to curse unwelcome visitors - and now each and every one of them was doomed to die. An unrecoverable loss of Stamina was just the beginning. Luckily, Redswift's knew of a powerful Healer that lived in the Moonstone Hills – perhaps he could rescue them from a Death Spell? The Healer's name was Yoritar. Stubb's village Stonebridge was also on the way to the Moonstone Hills, and they could replenish there. So it looked like finding Yoritar was their only hope! But first they had to escape the icy Caverns!

Rav ran thru a water drenched cave, only to discover it was acid, and copping nasty burns. Marcellos cast his Scroll of Dispel magic, turning the acid back to harmless water. They passed unscathed and entered a large chamber with walls of ice. An image of the Snow Witch appeared inside a glass Orb set atop an ice plinth. She scoffed at the Heroes, and boasted how her Spirit had regenerated and claiming they did not have the means to destroy her. Redswift and Stubb began to gasp for air as the magical Collars reactivated and tightened around their necks. Tetra threw a dagger at the Orb and 99 shot an arrow but both projectiles simply defelcted off the Orb. The Snow Witch returned fire, hitting the two female Heroes with lightening bolts that streaked from the Orb! Marcellos suggested the Heroes all return into the Caverns to seek a weapon that could destroy the Orb - but Ravager argued against retreating.

Silverarm leant him her Orb of Energy and then in an act of immense bravery – reminiscent of his leap into the Rivers of Blood – Rav charged at the Orb! His Boots of Speed surprised the Snow Witch but she still managed to loose a SKILL-sapping spell which drained some of Rav's abilities. But it was not enough to halt the warrior – who struck the Orb with his black Bat Sword. An explosion of ice blasted him to the ground, but Rav stood – and attacked – again and again. Marcellos was inspired and stormed in to join, as did 99 – each of them withstanding icy blasts that streaked from the Orb and hit truly. Finally the flurry of sword strikes from the three Heroes shattered the SNOW WITCH'S Orb! With the Orb nothing but shards of ice, the Heroes were safe, and the Witch's hold on Redswift and Stubb lapsed.

As the party made their escape through an exit that appeared, the SNOW WITCH'S maniacal laughter began to echo behind them. Suddenly her labyrinthine Crystal Caverns began to shake and collapse. Tons of rock and ice tumbled down, some smashing onto Rav, 99 and Marcellos. But with their Elven boots pumping, Rav and Marcellos lifted 99 up and scuttled her across the collapsing landscape to safety! Outside, the sun dawned a new day and the terrifying destruction of the Caverns ended with a deep rumble. Redswift and Stubb were able to remove their Collars of Obedience and received a few more scraps of provisions from Marcellos. The rest of the Heroes recuperated whatever STAMINA they could using herbs, provisions and the Orb of Energy. But they had little time to reflect on the magnitude and significance of their defeat of the SNOW WITCH – as now the spectre of the Death spell hung over all their heads. And so began their their arduous journey to the Moonstone Hills to find Yoritar. First stop – Stonebridge!

FIGHTING DANTASY

DEATHTRAP DUNGEON

Dan works his way through the *Fighting Fantasy* series, book by book, and records his efforts as he goes. We don't fancy his chances...

adapted from Fightingdantasy.blogspot.com

by DAN SATHERLEY

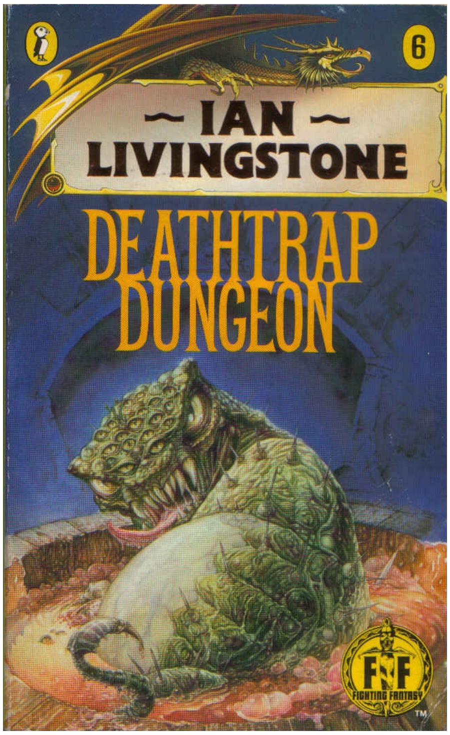
I've always had fond memories of *Deathtrap Dungeon*, perhaps in a large degree because of the fact when I was in third form (aged 12) I received 17/20 (top mark in the class, by the way) for a short story I wrote which was largely a rewrite of the introduction to *Deathtrap Dungeon*. Or was it my rewrite of *The Forest of Doom*? Ah bugger.

Anyway, the singular goal and incredibly varied situations made this book one to revisit over and over, perhaps then not entirely suited to a single, no-cheating go.

I rolled some perfect luck and stamina, which was just as well, as I was entering the tournament with the fighting skills of an animate wet paper bag. It probably didn't help that according to the introduction, I spent the week or so before entering the dungeon in a state of Bacchanalian indulgence, and had to pass through Blacksand. I've been killed, or nearly, by both of those things in earlier *Fighting Fantasy* books, if I recall correctly.

So there's a dungeon, created as a tourism investment, no one's ever escaped, riches on offer etc etc. What I don't get is that everyone in town turns out to watch the bounty hunters enter the maze, while none to date have ever returned – it seems kind of boring, doesn't it? Annually turning out to watch a bunch of doomed delusionals wander into a cave? All the action happens on the inside, after all.

And what action – the titular Deathtrap Dungeon is chocked with danger, disaster awaits at almost every turn. One website I came across in my brief post-death (oops, gave away the ending there...) research stated there were something like 31 possible instantaneous ways to die – meaning every time you look up a new page/paragraph, there's literally a one-in-13 chance you're gonna die. I quickly realised the book contains so many random deaths for no apparent reason – "You turned left! Bad choice. You die," kind of things – I took a little liberty in re-choosing which direction in which to walk. Not something I've done in the previous books, but *Deathtrap Dungeon* so lives up to its billing, it'd be impossible to review after one dip without doing so.



Anyway. Highlights? Okay, well, on entering, you come across six boxes, one for each of the competitors in this year's competition, including yourself. Your first decision pretty much is should you open the one with your name on it or not? The book makes it out to be pretty dramatic... till you realise there's no option to check out the boxes already opened, and whether footprints healthily led away from them.

Continuing my *Fighting Fantasy* habit of eating/drinking pretty much anything I come across, I drank some water I found in a bamboo stick. It's not like I'm going to get the chance to do that in real life now is it? Without much subtlety, or planning, the book then checked whether I'd drunk the bamboo water on the very next page I turned to... see what I mean? Brutal.

At one point in the maze I was asked whether I wanted to pick up a goblet. Now, at this point in the series, there was no penalty for carrying insane loads of trinkets and shit. I can't remember if there ever was a limit, but it seems pretty silly to say no, doesn't it? Rarely will an item you're carrying ever be the death of you in *Fighting Fantasy*.

Later in the book, I came within a STAMINA point of dying, during a fight, while abseiling from a giant Buddha-esque statue... a scene which contains one of the book's 50/50 death points, which nothing you've rolled or discovered can save you from. Annoying, cause you probably need one of those eye-gems to finish the book, given the level of detail the sequence entails, though I can't really recall.

I eventually died while hanging out and forming an 'alliance' with a fellow contestant. My death involved a pit I shouldn't have tried to jump, but a quick check of the alternative scenarios (as I explained above) showed that not even the 'right' decision or rolls could have saved me – another random sequence which may mirror the reality of the situation quite well (whatever reality there could be), but is a bitch for gameplay.

All in all, it didn't quite spark with me in the same way as I remembered it – perhaps then I was less put-off by instant deaths and less averse to 'reloads' from arbitrary save points (the last page number I could remember where I was alive!).

Perhaps *Trial of Champions*, the sequel-in-spirit, will survive the test of time a little better.

STATS COUNTER

GAMEBOOKS ATTEMPTED	11
GAMEBOOKS WON	1
DEATHS BY FALLING	2

Fighting Fantazine
THE FIGHTING FANTASY & GAMEBOOK FAN MAGAZINE

The Arcane Archive

The latest gamebooks and gamebook-related materials are reviewed by the Fighting Fantazine team...

ARCANA AGENCY
THE THIEF OF MEMORIES
A gamebook written by Paul Gresty
MEGARA ENTERTAINMENT

95 APPS
The classic *Fighting Fantasy* title *House of Hell* is scrubbed up for electronic devices by Tin Man Games and other *Fighting Fantasy* apps get a seeing to.

TROLLSZINE!
#7
THE FREE TUNNELS & TROLLS FANZINE

99 BOOKS
Arcana Agency: The Thief of Memories and *Maelorum: Volume One* are the new reads.

READ THE BOOK. PLAY THE GAME.
MAELORUM
VOLUME ONE
WILLIAM FINCHER

100 MAGAZINES
The two latest issues of *TrollsZine!* are put under the microscope.

101 RPGS
The new *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* manual, *Heroes Companion*, gets a look in.

ADVANCED FIGHTING FANTASY
HEROES COMPANION
GRAHAM BOTTLEY
ARION GAMES

SPOILERS! SPOILERS! SPOILERS! SPOILERS! SPOILERS! SPOILERS!

House of Hell

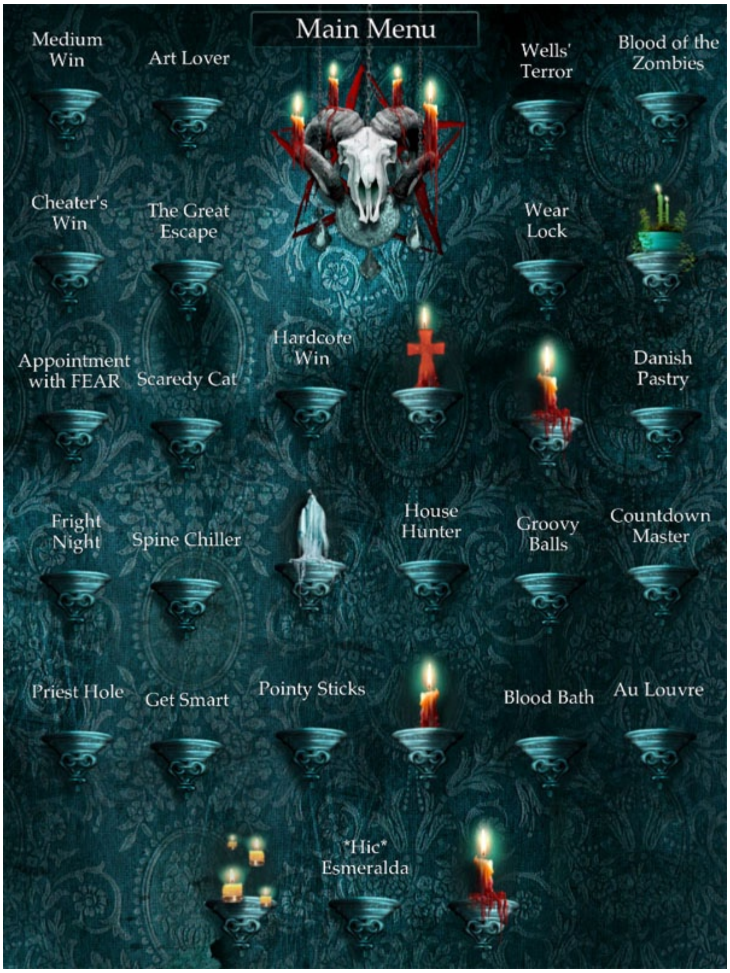
HELP! MURDER! We meet many a grisly end while exploring the dark and deadly House of Drumer.

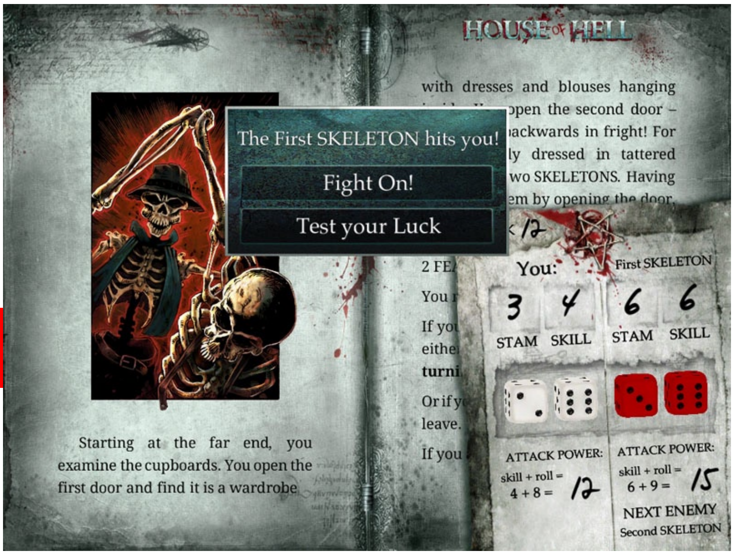
Author Steve Jackson **Publisher** Tin Man Games **Price** US$5.99
Web tinmangames.com.au **Published** January 18th, 2013

It was with great anticipation that I fired up Tin Man Games adaptation of *House of Hell* on my iPad. The company has been doing great things with the gamebook genre in the field of apps and after last year's *Blood of the Zombies* I had high hopes that a classic such as *House of Hell* would turn out to be something fabulous.

Right off the bat it has to be said that the book looks fantastic when presented on the retina iPad. Lots of vivid, wonderful colours that extend from the intro though to the design and art of the actual adventure. My only grumble here might be that the art does look a little fuzzy and not as sharp as hoped. Plus, while the aspect ratio of the art is maintained, this leaves black bars at either side of the artwork. Perhaps some block colour or other imagery could be used to fill the space on either side?

One of the achievements of the adventure is to reach all the references with artwork, which is a fairly easy ask (though it took a long time to reach paragraph 56). The other art-related achievement is to locate four scraps of cloth which allows you to unlock the alternative cover art by Dan Maxwell. This is a harder task, one where I feel it would be nice if the game told you how many pieces you have already collected (perhaps when tapping on the blank space in the Art Gallery?) as I've the feeling I've collected the same piece several times now!


Main Menu
Medium Win
Art Lover
Wells' Terror
Blood of the Zombies
Cheater's Win
The Great Escape
Wear Lock
Appointment with FEAR
Scaredy Cat
Hardcore Win
Danish Pastry
Fright Night
Spine Chiller
House Hunter
Groovy Balls
Countdown Master
Priest Hole
Get Smart
Pointy Sticks
Blood Bath
Au Louvre
Hic Esmeralda


HOUSE OF HELL
The First SKELETON hits you!
Fight On!
Test your Luck
You:
First SKELETON
3
4
6
6
STAM
SKILL
STAM
SKILL
ATTACK POWER:
skill + roll =
4 + 8 =
12
ATTACK POWER:
skill + roll =
6 + 9 =
15
NEXT ENEMY
Second SKELETON

Starting at the far end, you examine the cupboards. You open the first door and find it is a wardrobe

with dresses and blouses hanging
open the second door –
ackwards in fright! For
ly dressed in tattered
wo SKELETONS. Having
em by opening the door,

Meanwhile, from an atmospheric opening that teases with snippets of coloured art from the adventure, mixed with a soundtrack of music and sound effects, *House of Hell* lets the reader know exactly what they are in for should they tap the "play" tab on the main screen.

The music fills the soundscape of the book as you play, and while I wasn't bothered by it your mileage may vary on how intrusive you find it. Happily there exists the option to turn it off if it is not to your liking. Turning it off however leaves something of a hole in the audio that it would have nice to have filled by more atmospherics, perhaps even tying specific sounds to certain moments in the adventure, such as when you accidentally alert everyone to your whereabouts by ringing a loud gong or by having dogs barking when set upon by them.

For those who have played *House of Hell* before in its dead tree format, the essence of the book is all still there. Steve Jackson's knack for twisted design allows the house to feel larger and more confusing than it actually is, improving and perfecting on his Maze of Zagor from *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain*. He also takes great delight in building up the false trails of the adventure so that they are virtually indistinguishable from the one true path. Many is the time the reader is left wondering just where they went wrong as they come to another grisly end.

That said, for all the wonderful madness of the original book, Tin Man Games have taken the opportunity to tweak a small number of links to better improve the flow of the game where confusion might have been an issue. This does throw up one interesting point in how Tin Man Games interpret what constitutes knowing the butler. Those used to taking that option without having fought him may be in for a surprise!

Overall however, *House of Hell* is a highly recommended purchase. Tin Man Games continue to improve with each release, proving that the *Fighting Fantasy* is in excellent hands.

ALEXANDER BALLINGALL

Blood of the Zombies

Author Ian Livingstone **Publisher** Tin Man Games
Price US$5.99 **Web** tinmangames.com.au **Published** October 17th, 2012

The set up here with *Zombies* is almost identical to that of the *House of Hell* app and it is an attractive, easy to use interface that through the "Settings" feature gives the reader some scale to customise their reading experience to suit their tastes. Feel the text is too small or the font too hard to read – change it!

There is also a brief section on the history of *Fighting Fantasy*, giving newcomers some context for the release and those that follow, as well as the usual achievements and art gallery (which nicely gives you the option to view the art in the original black and white or the coloured versions of the app).

Combat is presented in a quick and simple manner (and the "Settings" allows you to speed up the dice rolls if that begins to wear on you) with appropriate levels of violence on display and the artwork is rendered in suitably zombie-ish colours of death and decay. There is even a quick and simple zombie-slaying counter which chalks up your kills on the opening screen with tally marks.

Working your way through the adventure is a fun experience, although it might have been nice for these adaptations to have had some auto-mapping feature (akin to the Kindle versions) which would make working out where you *haven't* been a bit easier (with the same being true for *House of Hell*). In some respects *Blood of the Zombies* works better as an app than as a traditional gamebook, which I sometimes wonder might have been a factor than was driving Ian Livingstone's designing of the adventure.

Tin Man Games seem more than aware that *Blood of the Zombies* played to the exacting standards of the book is nigh on impossible to beat, even when they *start* with the revised STAMINA roll of 2d6+20! As such they offer a "Medium" level setting (also featured in *House of Hell* where it isn't so desperately needed) that not only boosts a player's starting STAMINA, but places extra ammunition, wepaons, and means of restoring health along the various paths of the game.

Music and sound effects are used to spice up things, though there is sadly a distinct lack of zombie moans to the audio (there is an odd sort of howling during battles). Perhaps I'm asking too much to ask for the death rattle of a zombie when they are killed? The only other audio quibble would be that despite various weapons available for combat, there is a limited repertoire of sounds - a baseball bat makes the same noise as a sword.

That these are the only slights on the app should give you some idea of how impressive it all is. *Blood of the Zombies* is recommended purchase for new fans and jaded die-hards alike – every if you'll probably spend most of your time playing it on the easier difficulty levels!

ALEXANDER BALLINGALL

The Warlock of Firetop Mountain: Lost Chapters

Publisher Commando Kiwi **Price** Free
Web commandokiwi.co.uk **Published** February 25th, 2013

To say that this is an 'interesting' item of *Fighting Fantasy*-related material to review would be something of an understatement. *Lost Chapters*, like *Dire Consequences* reviewed overleaf, was one of four games based on *Fighting Fantasy* developed for the 2012 Unreal Tournament held in Birmingham. While the title based on *Armies of Death* has yet to surface for the general public to play, the other three have – although the *Deathtrap Dungeon* title is only playable on Windows-based PCs. This title and *Dire Consequences* have both made the transition to Apple's iOS and thus can be downloaded and played for free on the iPad.

So, what to make of this amateur undertaking? Well, 'amateur' is certainly the word to keep in mind while attempting the adventure. Set outside and within Firetop Mountain from the original 1982 classic *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain*, the player controls a hero armed with a sword who braves the hostile environment.

The environment is rendered adequately in a fashion that would have seemed revolutionary back in the days of *Doom* and the original *Tomb Raider*, but which are fairly genric and standard today. That said, given the constraints Commando Kiwi were operating under for the contest, the rendering of the locations and monsters is nothing to sneeze at.

Meanwhile, sadly, there is nothing built into the game in terms of instruction on how to play, leaving the player to simply attempt things by tapping at places on the screen. A few pop up instructions near the start would have been very welcome. While navigating the environment is fairly straightforward, if somewhat awkward, other aspects are not so clear as to how things are meant to be done such as battle and healing yourself or restoring magic points. None are immediately obvious till you mash the screen for a bit.

Quickly a sort of backstory is assembled for the place the hero finds themselves in, with various letters and diary pages scattered about which suggest a previous party of humans have fought their way the tunnels of Firetop Mountain only to meet a grisly end. Keys are a feature, just as with the gamebook of old, and there are plenty of (what appear to be) Goblins to fight.

In the end *Lost Chapters* is an interesting experiment, one that took the crown at the 2012 contest, pitching the classic *Fighting Fantasy* tale to a different audience in a different medium. How it compares to the earlier more professional effort of the NintendoDS adaptation of *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain* I couldn't say having never played that version.

It is probably not everything Commando Kiwi had wished it to be when setting out, thanks to the demands of the contest, but it is not as awful as it potentially could have been. In making that statement I'm aware that I'm fairly sure that much of my free time in the future will not be spent playing the app. It needs more time and money spent on it if it is to be of lasting interest to gamers and for *Fighting Fantasy* fan is an odd curiosity. Still, as it is free, and if you have access to the app, give it a whirl and make up your own mind.

ALEXANDER BALLINGALL

The Citadel of Chaos: Dire Consequences

Publisher Derp Studios **Price** Free
Web derpstudios.com **Published** November 1st, 2012

With a quick introductory screen that sketches out the basic narrative of the adventure, the second of the Unreal Tournament adventures gets underway.

Based on Steve Jackson's first solo *Fighting Fantasy* adventure *The Citadel of Chaos*, *Dire Consequnces* take the route of being a direct sequel to the events of that gamebook. The player is cast as the son of King Salamon LVII, sent to Dree to put an end to the outbreak of Chaos Souls that are now rampaging through Allansia after having slipped the control of the defeated Balthus Dire.

A wave-based game in the fashion of online multi-player games like the Zombie-slaughter game *Killing Floor*, the principal objective of each level is to eliminate all of the Chaos Souls that are attacking before they can wear your health down. Each round is more of the same expect for the growing number of enemies attacking the player.

Similar to *Lost Chapters* is the choice of buttons to determine combat actions, but that is about where any likeness ends between the two. *Dire Consequences* is immediately more focussed on combat as evident by the fact that the 'attack' and 'defend' controls remain on screen at all times.

So not only is the style of gameplay quite different from *Lost Chapters*, which was much more of a *Tomb Raider*-style exploratory adventure, but Derp Studios have also taken different choices in how the narrative unfolds. The break between each wave is filled by two things, the first of which is a short screen of text which attempts to push the story along.

Not only do these keep things going in terms of story, but it is clear that some attempt has been made to fill in incidental details of the fictional universe here and there. How well this information fits with what has already been established of Titan in the various books will be a battle for the Titannica wiki editors to sort out!

The second feature of the breaks is something that would be familiar to players of wave-style games – the upgrade shop. Between each round of attacks by the Chaos Souls, the player has the opportunity to 'spend' the booty they capture for defeating the Chaos Souls, obtaining a range of magics that can then be used in further combat.

Sadly, there is no connection between the rune magic available to the player and the MAGIC system present in the original *The Citadel of Chaos*. The seller however is amusingly presented as what appears to be a talking toad!

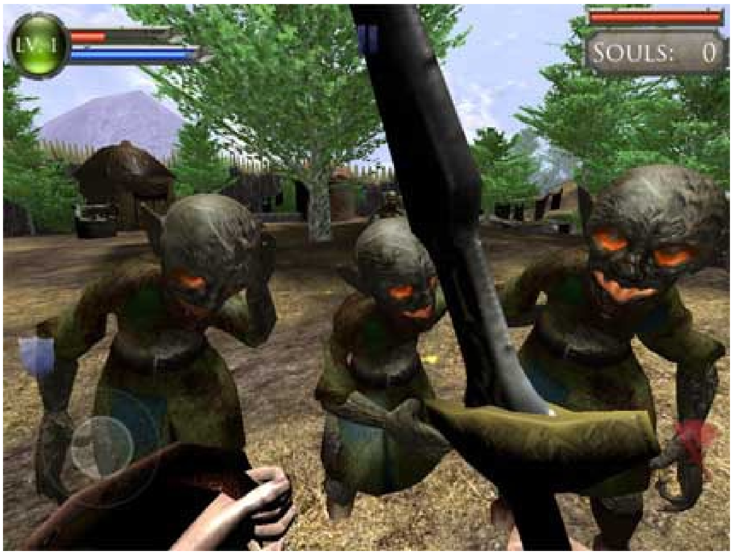
What is immediately noticeable during combat is that very little concession has been made to someone playing on iOS, a small crosshairs indicating that really the player is meant to be using a mouse to navigate.

As a result, trying to fight and move when playing on an iPad is somewhat difficult at the best of times and I often resorted to the old combat standby of running in circles around the Chaos Souls, swinging madly with my sword in the hopes of getting in a few lucky strikes with each pass. To my surprise in a 'conversation' this was a tactic later endorsed by the shopkeep who was selling the runes!

The graphics meanwhile are on a par with *Lost Chapters* in most respects, as is the music and sound effects. They aren't stunning or beautiful, but they get the job done as far as gameplay is concerned.

So, like *Lost Chapters*, this game is again something of a glimpse into a different path that the *Fighting Fantasy* franchise could take. It is one that could work, but the style of game is something that I feel has limited potential in terms of player interest. But, again, as it is free, try it out for yourself and see what you make of it.

ALEXANDER BALLINGALL



Gamebook Companion

Author Mark Stoneham
Price US$0.99
Published September 17th, 2012

This little app for iOS is designed to act as a reuseable *Adventure Sheet* for gamers. It allows for the tracking of the three main stats from *Fighting Fantasy*, along with a MAGIC score, with the provision of space to record scores for four further stats (there is even a horseshoe button for automatically *Testing Your Luck*). Also provided is slots for 30 items of equipment as well as the recording of Provision and Gold.

Another section is allowed for the tracking of opponents stats in battle along with the ability to roll one or two dice as adventures dictate. What is great however is after entering your enemies stats you can opt to use the 'Quick Attack' button (two crossed swords) and the app will run the battle for you, automatically deducting STAMINA as needed. Finally a spot is reserved for recording what paragraph number you are up to.

Designed mainly for the iPod/iPhone, the app will run on an iPad and a magnification button allows it to fill the screen with little loss of resolution. A great little app, well worth the small change asked for and one that ultimately means that you no longer need two dice, a pencil, and an eraser to play a *Fighting Fantasy* gamebook – all you need is this app!

ALEXANDER BALLINGALL

Maelorum: Volume One

Author William Fincher **Publisher** Living Lore Studio **Price** US$24.99
Web maelorum.com **Published** March 12th, 2013

Maelorum is a fantastic gamebook that shows that gamebooks have definitely evolved since the first *Fighting Fantasy* books were published.

At its heart, *Maelorum* is an old fashioned dungeon crawl but it has incorporated many other elements into it that make it much much more than a simple game where you kill monsters and collect loot.

First of all, you have the characters. Rather than playing a faceless adventurer, you can choose to be Edan Kain, a knight and the king's favourite, raevena, a gypsy rogue in search of riches and a better life or Bryn Moorcast, a young wizard apprentice with a traumatic past.

These characters are fully rounded with their own goals, place within the world and connections to the people in the book. The story is structured so that the situations you come across are dealt with differently depending on your character. An NPC might have a different reaction to you if you are Bryn Moorcast than if you are Edan Kain. This means that the book has a huge amount of replayability with each character getting a very different path to take.

The world building is fantastic. Through reading books and notes, you get the feel of being in a living breathing fantasy realm where each race has its own place in the world and unique characteristics.

For example, you get to see the Goblin alphabet and attempt to decode it. The books that you find which tell you about the races, the artefacts and the origin story give us the sense that the world of Maelorum has a rich a detailed history.

The writing really serves to bring the place and its people to life as well as making the instructions and rules explanations clear and easy to follow.

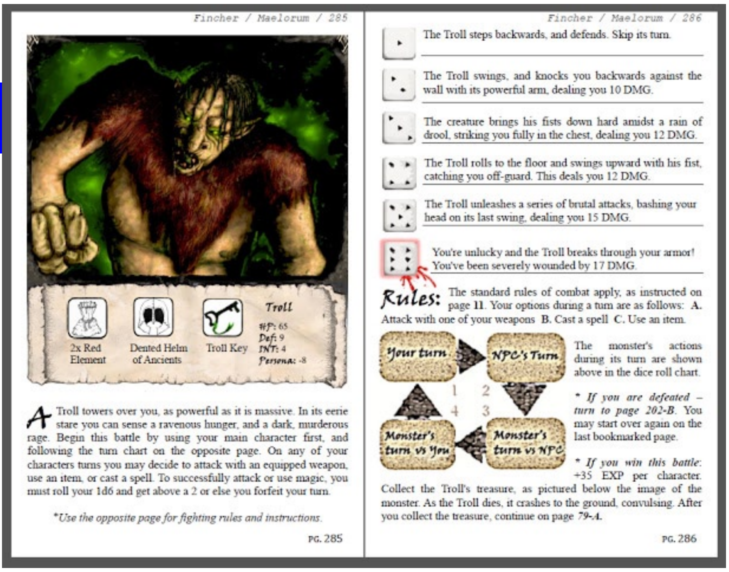
Will Fincher has also decided to put item descriptions in a glossary at the back of the book, rather than detailing them as you find them which is an excellent idea as it means that you don't have to read the same text about an item each time you find it and also the immersion is not broken by suddenly having a lot of rules text every time you find an item.

The colour illustrations and drawings are beautiful and also add to the game aspect of the book. There are small drawings of different items that act as a reminder as well as excellent colour illustrations of monsters and locations for you to adore.

The game system is slightly more complex than your average gamebook but it offers a wide variety of options for your character's equipment and skills and also allows them to advance with an experience system. You feel that you can build yourself a unique character and take them in various directions.

Combat is also simple yet very versatile. You choose a weapon to strike your opponent with and roll to see if you hit, which you do on a 2 or more on one die. You then roll one die to see which tactic your opponent employs against you.

Combat, like everything in *Maelorum*, is laid out in a very helpful way. Each creature has two pages showing you an illustration, its stats and then a very helpful table with its combat tactics and the order that combat occurs in.



Fincher / Maelorum / 285

Troll
HP: 65
Def: 9
INT: 4
Persona: -8

A Troll towers over you, as powerful as it is massive. In its eerie stare you can sense a ravenous hunger, and a dark, murderous rage. Begin this battle by using your main character first, and following the turn chart on the opposite page. On any of your characters turns you may decide to attack with an equipped weapon, use an item, or cast a spell. To successfully attack or use magic, you must roll your 1d6 and get above a 2 or else you forfeit your turn.

**Use the opposite page for fighting rules and instructions.*

PG. 285

Fincher / Maelorum / 286

⚀	The Troll steps backwards, and defends. Skip its turn.
⚁	The Troll swings, and knocks you backwards against the wall with its powerful arm, dealing you 10 DMG.
⚂	The creature brings his fists down hard amidst a rain of drool, striking you fully in the chest, dealing you 12 DMG.
⚃	The Troll rolls to the floor and swings upward with his fist, catching you off-guard. This deals you 12 DMG.
⚄	The Troll unleashes a series of brutal attacks, bashing your head on its last swing, dealing you 15 DMG.
⚅	You're unlucky and the Troll breaks through your armor! You've been severely wounded by 17 DMG.

Rules: The standard rules of combat apply, as instructed on page **11**. Your options during a turn are as follows: **A.** Attack with one of your weapons **B.** Cast a spell **C.** Use an item.

The monster's actions during its turn are shown above in the dice roll chart.

* *If you are defeated – turn to page 202-B.* You may start over again on the last bookmarked page.

* *If you win this battle:* +35 EXP per character. Collect the Troll's treasure, as pictured below the image of the monster. As the Troll dies, it crashes to the ground, convulsing. After you collect the treasure, continue on page *79-A*.

PG. 286

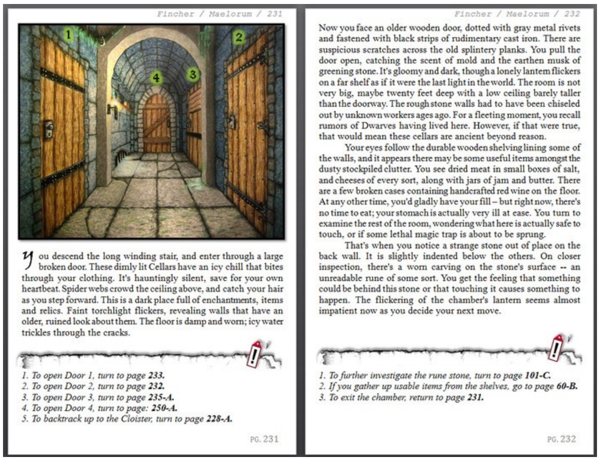
The story and system also allow you to have an NPC to help you along and fight alongside you. Sometimes, perspective will shift from you to your companion if you split up. I also came across a mini quest with the purpose of helping you get used to playing your companion for the first time. The book is very helpful like that.

The book is also helpful for situations when you have to turn to another page for some information such as for combat or to read a book that you are carrying. It encourages you to use a bookmark to remember which paragraph you came from or which paragraph you need to go to. Gamebooks have done this before but they have never encouraged you to use their own bookmark until now.

I played the game as Ravena, a gypsy rogue who explored many places from wizard schools to lost tombs to goblin warrens in order to find the Heart of Maelorum. I also befriended Bryn Moorcast, saved some students and discovered the truth about my father. Small details in the gamebook became very important later on, such as the authors of certain books that you read.

Maelorum is not exaggerating when it says that it is an epic gamebook. Here is a gamebook with a wide range of choices, an excellent system and a huge living, breathing world to explore. It is a fantastic gamebook and well worth the money.

STUART LLOYD



Fincher / Maelorum / 231

You descend the long winding stair, and enter through a large broken door. These dimly lit Cellars have an icy chill that bites through your clothing. It's hauntingly silent, save for your own heartbeat. Spider webs crowd the ceiling above, and catch your hair as you step forward. This is a dark place full of enchantments, items and relics. Faint torchlight flickers, revealing walls that have an older, ruined look about them. The floor is damp and worn; icy water trickles through the cracks.

1. *To open Door 1, turn to page* ***233.***
2. *To open Door 2, turn to page* ***232.***
3. *To open Door 3, turn to page* ***235-A.***
4. *To open Door 4, turn to page:* ***250-A.***
5. *To backtrack up to the Cloister, turn to page* ***228-A.***

PG. 231

Fincher / Maelorum / 232

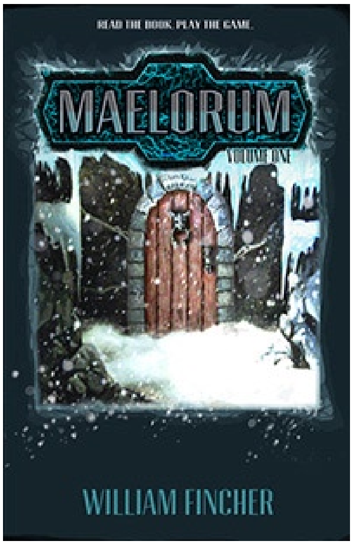
Now you face an older wooden door, dotted with gray metal rivets and fastened with black strips of rudimentary cast iron. There are suspicious scratches across the old splintery planks. You pull the door open, catching the scent of mold and the earthen musk of greening stone. It's gloomy and dark, though a lonely lantern flickers on a far shelf as if it were the last light in the world. The room is not very big, maybe twenty feet deep with a low ceiling barely taller than the doorway. The rough stone walls had to have been chiseled out by unknown workers ages ago. For a fleeting moment, you recall rumors of Dwarves having lived here. However, if that were true, that would mean these cellars are ancient beyond reason.

Your eyes follow the durable wooden shelving lining some of the walls, and it appears there may be some useful items amongst the dusty stockpiled clutter. You see dried meat in small boxes of salt, and cheeses of every sort, along with jars of jam and butter. There are a few broken cases containing handcrafted red wine on the floor. At any other time, you'd gladly have your fill – but right now, there's no time to eat; your stomach is actually very ill at ease. You turn to examine the rest of the room, wondering what here is actually safe to touch, or if some lethal magic trap is about to be sprung.

That's when you notice a strange stone out of place on the back wall. It is slightly indented below the others. On closer inspection, there's a worn carving on the stone's surface -- an unreadable rune of some sort. You get the feeling that something could be behind this stone or that touching it causes something to happen. The flickering of the chamber's lantern seems almost impatient now as you decide your next move.

1. *To further investigate the rune stone, turn to page* ***101-C.***
2. *If you gather up usable items from the shelves, go to page* ***60-B.***
3. *To exit the chamber, return to page* ***231.***

PG. 232



Arcana Agency: The Thief of Memories

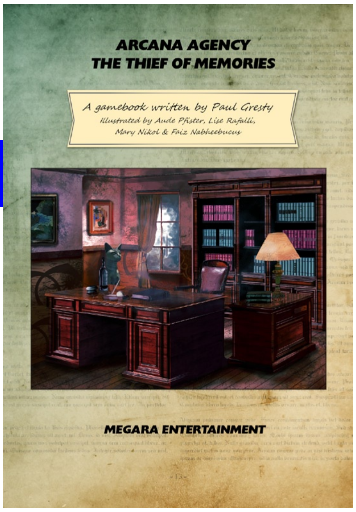
Author Paul Gresty **Publisher** Megara Entertainment **Price** US$40.00
Web megara-entertainment.com **Published** January 10th, 2013

Funded thanks to a Kickstarter campaign last year, this handsome looking hardback gamebook has finally been released to backers (the ebook in January and the physical copy in March).

Arcana Agency places the player in control of three investigators (Humphrey, Joe, and Tom) who represent the New York branch of the agency of the title and the adventure takes place in the 1930s. This immediately gives the book two distinctive flavours to it, the historical-nostalgic look back at a past time period and the paranormal-meets-every day clash, setting up a heady mix of possibilities.

Although subtitled *The Thief of Memories*, the book is effectively two adventures, the main one of the title and a much shorter prologue that establishes the setting and the player's characters. Even then the main adventure is broken into three parts which helps keep things feeling fresh as the player moves from one 'act' to the next.

The aim of the gamebook seems to be atmosphere and investigating, down-playing the usual gamebook logistics of combat, currency, and health. As such, the tale rattles along at a fair clip with minimal intervention from dice rolls and relies more on codewords to keep a track of things than anything else.


ARCANA AGENCY
THE THIEF OF MEMORIES
A gamebook written by Paul Gresty
Illustrated by Aude Pfister, Lise Rafalli, Mary Nikol & Faiz Nabheebucus
MEGARA ENTERTAINMENT

So while the prologue can feel like it is over in the blink of an eye, the player does feel like they have actually been noticing clues and making choices based on what they have observed. Since the player has control of three investigators this means that events can take place concurrently and Gresty makes use of this with first two parts of the main adventure, two seemingly separate tales that draw together for the final part of the adventure.

The book is in full colour and illustrated throughout by a team of artists. While the artwork is of a generally high standard and works for the book, occasionally one comes across a piece that doesn't feel quite like it fits. That said, it is a minor quibble given the talent on offer. Then there is holding the hardback book in your hands, which makes you wish that *Fighting Fantasy* titles could be afforded such luxury (even if it made collecting *Fighting Fantasy* an expensive habit!).

The Thief of Memories is an interesting experiment in story-telling, gamebook presentation, and financial pluck. But one that was well worth the attempt in my opinion. If you weren't one of the kickstarter backers and want a copy of this excellent book, then get in quick as there are only about 100 extra copies available with no reprint planned.

ALEXANDER BALLINGALL

TrollsZine! 6

Editor Dan Hembree **Publisher** Trollbridge Production **Price** Free
Web trollbridge.proboards.com **Published** October 31st, 2012

This edition of *TrollsZine!* focuses more on the fundamentals of *Tunnels & Trolls* – delving – travelling to dungeons, hacking up monsters and clambering out with sackfuls of loot. It also comes with not one but two solos and also two GM adventures (one very short and one quite long). The articles in this issue are less to do with quirky additions and more to do with the logistics of adventuring.

We get some extra rules on eating, hunger and finding food in the wilderness, helpful guidelines on how to use henchmen in solo adventures and a comprehensive list of armour along with their descriptions and special rules. As always, these articles provide simple ideas for ways to make adventures or solos more interesting.

There is a short GM adventure at the beginning of the book, where the characters have to escape from a locked room. It will provide an interesting puzzle to present to your players which they may find easy or frustratingly hard depending on what your players are like.

The long GM scenario is a great and novel adventure that offers a lot of room for role playing, exploring Trollworld and encountering interesting NPCs. The players are fire giants who have been exiled from their tribe because a feast they were guarding was interrupted by a wizard who teleported into the middle of it.

The motives of the wizard are left for the GM to decide if and when they become relevant later. For the time being, the Fire Giants have to survive exile in an icy land, and in the process, they meet the Ice people and their guardian who is in need of a replacement. This scenario can play out in a number of ways, and, like many *Tunnels & Trolls* adventures, has the characters' lives take completely unexpected turns.

TrollsZine!
#6
Fall 2012
Ice Exile
GM Adventure
by Mark Thornton
Soul Survivor
Solo Adventure
by Sid Orpin
Night Walk in the Wild Woods
Solo Adventure
by James Fallows
Old Kramm
Short Story by Roy Cram
And much more!
The Free Tunnels & Trolls™ Fanzine

The solos have classic *Tunnels & Trolls* elements in them. One involves you walking across the countryside and the other involves you escaping from a demon inhabited cave. The first one involves you gaining Adventure Points if you can come up with a spooky simile and has a nice 'death' paragraph which tells you that you go insane but at least you don't die or become a shade.

The second adventure, where you manage to escape from a demonic sacrifice but you need to escape the cave. You can always make the best of a bad situation and you can come out with a magical item or a stat boost.

The short story is a great tale of Old Kramm, the misunderstood troll and it provides a nice diversion. This issue is not as quirky as others, but there is a taste in there. There is plenty of quirkiness in the combat example entitled A Toothpick vs a Broadsword. It gives some great ideas on how to spice up combat. This is another solid entry in the *TrollsZine!* series which contains several hints and tips on making great adventures and contains some of its own great adventures.

STUART LLOYD

TrollsZine! 7

Editor Dan Hembree **Publisher** Trollbridge Production **Price** Free
Web trollbridge.proboards.com **Published** March 19th, 2013

TrollsZine! is full of whimsy and entertainment in this explosive issue. We start with an article on undead monsters that you could come across, but there is one entry which really shows flair and imagination called 'The Bombie': *'The Bombie is the undead equivalent of the smart bomb (Zombie? Smart?), created by a progressive Necromancer looking to make the most out of her minions. You only have to throw one at your players, and they will worry about any torch-carrying zombies they come across as long as you are game-mastering.'*

On the topic of explosions, the zine also covers methods of apocalypse with an excellent article on the K-bomb and how to calculate just how much devestation it wrecks upon the world. It also has an article on gunpowder weapons, which includes rules for using gunpowder weapons as melee weapns, a list of interesting weapons such as the axe gun, volley gun and grenade launcher (who wouldn't want one of those?), and also highlights what might happen in the event of a misfire.

As well as the undead, we get a description of a Chaos Cloud told through the medium of an adventurer telling a story in a tavern. There is also an article which gives you more options for monster special abilities during combat. This is particularly good to spice up a straightforward combat when you are fighting something with just a monster raring and no special abilities.

TrollsZine!
#7
Spring 2013
Castle Pynnesse
GM Adventure
by Tori Bergquist
The Wizard's Hut
Solo Adventure
by J. C. Lambert
Sometimes the Saving Rolls
Are With You – Short Story
by Ira Lee Gossett
Raising Spirits
by Justin Williams
And much more!
The Free Tunnels & Trolls Fanzine

For the player characters, there are options on how various classic RPG classes could fit within the *Tunnels & Trolls* classes. It describes how you would play such a character and what weapons, spells and talents they would have. This provides some great insight into providing variety to *Tunnels & Trolls*' four main classes. It also gives you ideas for rewarding these players for role-playing their characters correctly and also reminding us that combat does not just have to involve rolling lots of dice – players can also suggest stunts that they can do in combat and perform a saving roll to get the upper hand.

The solo, *A Wizard's Hut* involves you exploring a seemingly abandoned wizard's abode and all the dangers that it involves. The GM adventure involves the PCs trying to purge an ancient castle of undead. It involves plenty of lore on the castle as well as a lot of detail on the characters in the area and the village nearby. This scenario should provide plenty for players to go on. There is a great article on the various solos that beginners can use to build themselves up to more advanced characters and also how to adapt solos for low level characters into challenges for advanced characters. Solo play has always been one of the strengths of *Tunnels & Trolls* and it is always good to see RPG systems provide plenty of material for those of us who love gamebooks. So get issue 7 as it is full of quality articles and it is free!

STUART LLOYD

Heroes Companion

Author Graham Bottley **Publisher** Arion Games **Price** US$24.99
Web arion-games.com **Published** February 6th, 2013

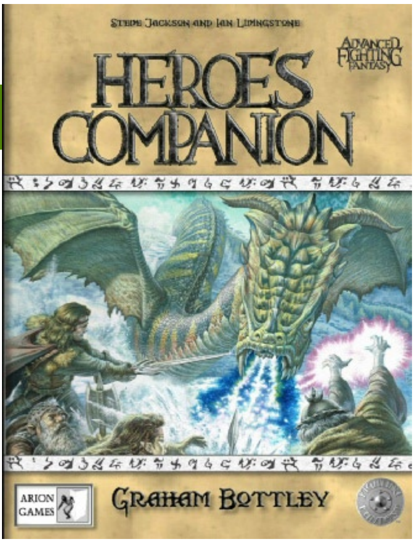
The *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* mannual *Heroes' Companion* is a welcome expansion to the *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* game which manages to link its rules to both the original *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* and also provide some shout outs to the *Fighting Fantasy* world of Titan.

The new rules allow a wider range of character choices, scenarios and NPCs.

First of all, there are new skills and talents which allow greater customisability of characters, for example, allowing characters to use one priestly ability or allow the hero to not be surprised in combat. I think that Graham Bottley can go further with combat orientated options for *Advanced Fighting Fantasy*, because without them, combat in *Fighting Fantasy* is down to the roll of the dice more than the choices the player makes.

I enjoyed reading through the list of new magical styles. Some of them are more suited to NPCs such as tattoo magic (a nice shout out to *The Riddling Reaver*) and mask magic (another nice shout out, this time to *Caverns of the Snow Witch*), but some of them are also very useful for player characters.

Battle magic makes a welcome return from *Allansia* and, although the cost of battle magic spells is a lot higher than in *Allansia*, I welcome the cost increase as it makes sense for spells to affect large units of soldiers should cost more than spells that affect individuals.



The enchanting magic style has also been introduced to provide some more concrete rules for creating, levelling and costing magic items. Other magical styles include conjuration (summoning creatures), necromancy and what appears to be the fun chaos magic, which allows the caster to cast any sorcery or wizard spell, but at a high risk to the caster.

There are several chapters which allow the director to take their adventure in new directions. Instead of just killing monsters for gold, the director could introduce hirelings to the players, allow them to run their own domains and also fight mass battles. These rules will provide greater variety to the players. There is also a chapter on wilderness adventures, which allows exploration of the outdoors.

The book finishes off with afflictions which weaken a player in some way. They are also a good source for a quest so that the player can set off to find a way to cure their affliction.

The *Heroes' Companion* is a must buy for anyone who wants to run or play an *Advanced Fighting Fantasy* game, offering players and directors more options to take their characters and adventures in whole new directions.

STUART LLOYD

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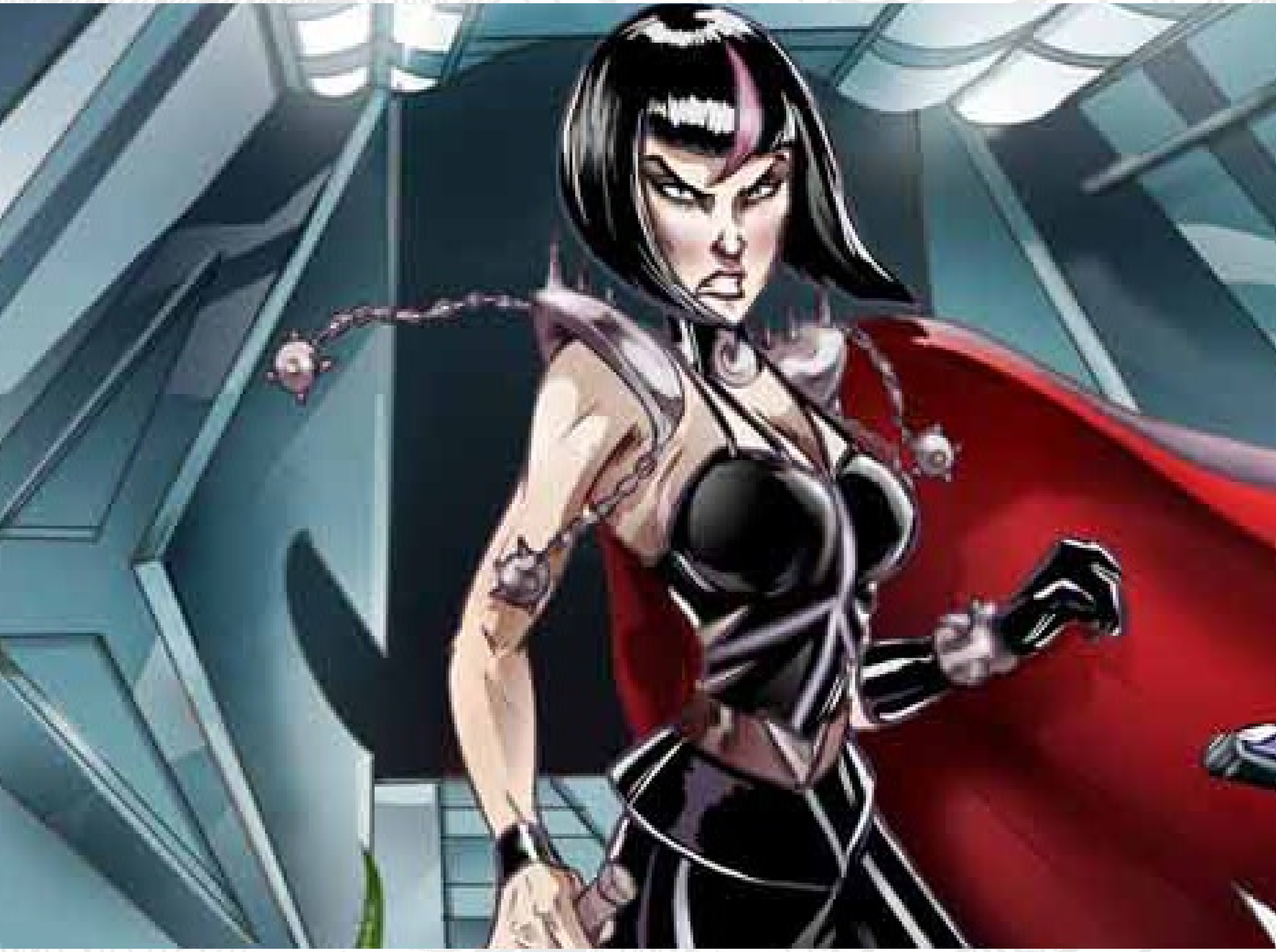
Fighting Fantazine

THE FIGHTING FANTASY & GAMEBOOK FAN MAGAZINE



Starhunt: Void Slavers
A *Fighting Fantasy* adventure by Ian Brocklehurst.

A Man of letters
Robin Waterfield chats about his gamebooks, being a consulting editor, and current pursuits.

2013 Survey
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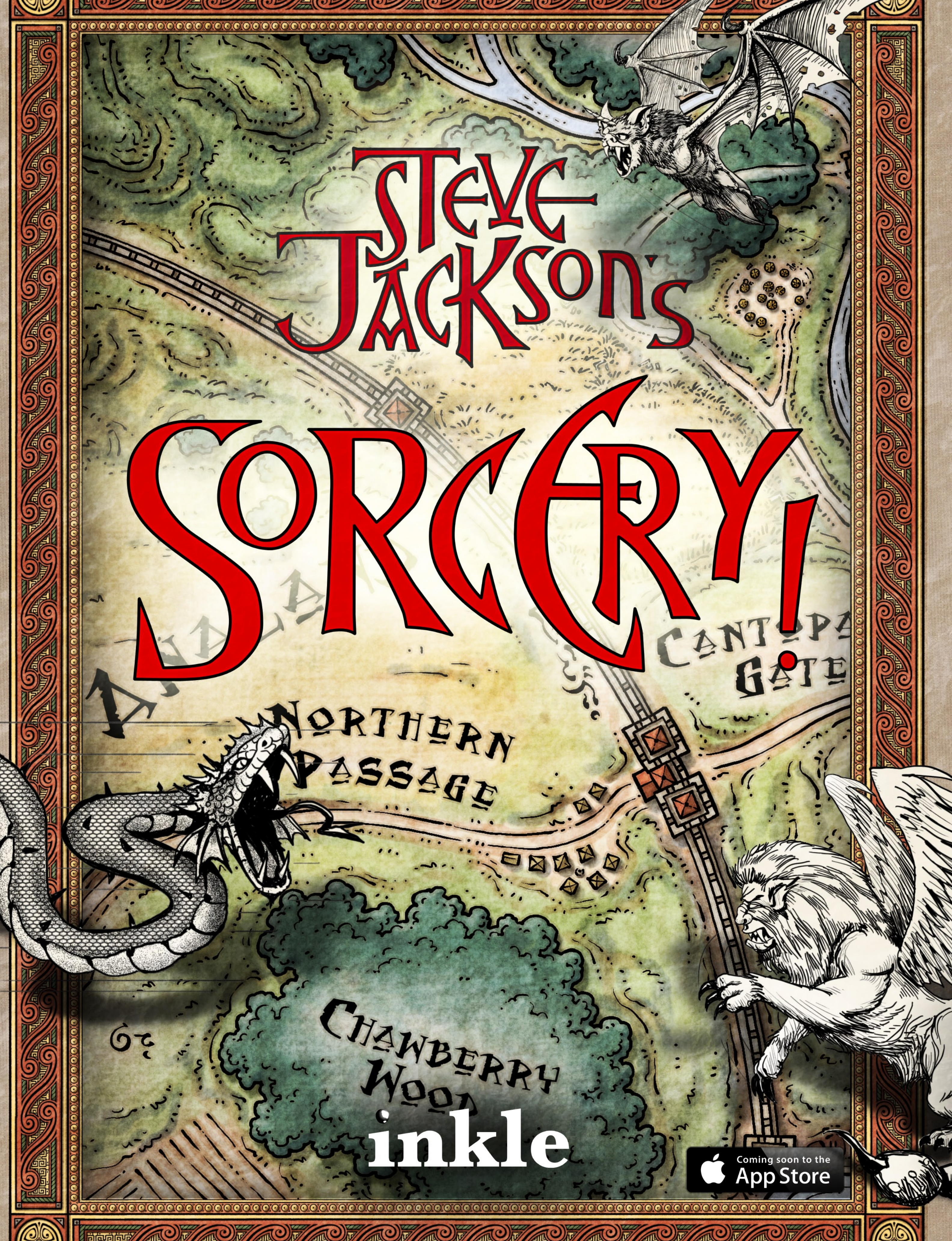
ISSUE 12 DUE AUGUST 2013


Steve Jackson's
Sorcery!
Northern Passage
Chawberry Wood
inkle
Coming soon to the App Store